

MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE.

JUNE, 1890.

KIRSTEEN.

THE STORY OF A SCOTCH FAMILY, SEVENTY YEARS AGO.

CHAPTER XXXV.

DURING the six years which had passed since she left Drumcarro, Kirsteen had heard but little of the home which she had sacrificed perhaps too passionately, too hastily. Marg'ret's letters indeed were very regular, if few and scanty in detail, but these were conditions natural to the time, and Kirsteen had never expected more. "Your mother is just in her ordinary." This seemed satisfaction enough to a mind unaccustomed to correspondence, brought up in the philosophy of long silences, of little intercourse, of blank years which went over on all sides in an understood routine, and in which the nearest relations when they met each other, remarked upon the external "ageing" of so many additional years with a placid sense that it must be so. Mary also, dutiful to all the necessities of the family, communicated periodically to Kirsteen the course of events in her own particular family, as well as a more or less vague report of the paternal house. She had by this time three little children in whom naturally all her chief interests centred. Old Glendochart had become "papa" to his wife, and was reported as being very hale and hearty for his time of life, and very much taken up with his young family. While "my mother is just in her ordinary," re-

mained the habitual report, differing only from Marg'ret's in the pronoun employed. Now and then indeed Mary would open out into an account of the company that had been at Glendochart for the shooting, and there was one subject on which she was even eloquent, and that was the beauty of Jeanie the younger sister in whom her family pride was gratified, as well as perhaps the only bit of romantic and generous feeling which was in Lady Glendochart's well regulated bosom. "Our Jeanie!" From her babyhood the sisters had all been proud of her. And Mary was pleased with the distinction she herself had over Kirsteen in having a house to which she could invite Jeanie, and where the praises of the young beauty could delight her ears, ever reflecting back again, as she felt, an honour upon herself. There was nobody far and near who had not heard of Drumcarro's lovely daughter. She was the Lily of Loch Fyne. The visitors at the Castle took long rides all about Drumcarro, and the Linn had been elevated into one of the sights of the district, all with a view of procuring a glimpse, if possible, of the beautiful Highland girl. And Lord John, Mary had reported, was particularly civil, and a very great admirer, words which were deeply underlined, and which filled Kirsteen with indignation. To think that after all the rebuffs she had herself given him he

should endeavour to beguile the guileless Jeanie! Kirsteen had at once written a warning letter to Mary, informing her very decisively that Lord John was not a man to be allowed the enjoyment of Jeanie's company. "For he can have no right meaning, and is only a useless idle person," Kirsteen said. This had produced a warm reply from Mary under a frank received from the Duke, by means of the same Lord John.

"You are very ready with your letters, and a heavy postage to pay," Mrs. Campbell wrote, aggrieved, "when you have really no news to give us. And as for the warning about Lord John, I hope me and Glendochart have sense enough to take care of Jeanie; and what can you, a mantua-maker in London, know about a young gentleman of such high family, the best of our name? I would advise you, my dear Kirsteen, not to encourage a spirit of envy. For if you never received such attention yourself it is partly the fault of providence that gave you red hair and no beauty, and partly your own that cast away all the advantages of your family. But you cannot think that me and Glendochart are likely to go to you for counsel upon affairs of which you can have no experience."

This letter did not please Kirsteen, as may well be supposed. We are all made up of great feelings and of petty ones, and are not always at our best. Kirsteen had a heart of the noblest constancy, and held the contents of her little silver casket above all that the world could give. But at more vulgar moments it sometimes gave her a sting to know that, notwithstanding all her passion of love and faithfulness, prosaic Mary, who had never known a throb of profound feeling in her life, would assume airs of superior importance, and pity the sister who had no man, and would be an old maid all her life. A woman may be capable of taking her part in a tragedy such as Kirsteen's, yet resent the comedy, generally more or less contemptuous, that winds itself about an unmarried

woman's life, and more at that period than now. She was very angry at the neglect of her warning, but this was only an incident and soon dropped into oblivion.

One day, however, late in the year in which she had performed her rapid and melancholy journey Kirsteen received, by private hand, and in the shape of a small brown paper parcel concealing a letter in many wrappings, news of a very distressing kind. It was supposed in those days of dear postage to be illegal to send a letter by the private hand, which most simple country people infinitely preferred as at once surer and cheaper than the post. This, as Marg'ret informed her in the hurried scrawl enclosed, was to be taken by a lad from the village who was going straight to London, and had promised to deliver it at once. It was to tell Kirsteen that her mother was very ill, so ill that Marg'ret had given up all hope. "I have never done so before," Marg'ret wrote, "so you may trust me that this is not a fright on my part. And she just yammers for Kirsteen night and day—little, little has she ever said till now—she's full of complaints, poor body, but yet she's more patient than words can say. Ye must just come without a moment's delay; and if he will not let you in, I will let you in, for she shall not be crossed in her last wish by any man, if he was three times her husband—so, my dear bairn, just come and let there be no delay." Kirsteen obeyed this summons, as she was commanded, at once. To go so soon again over the same ground, and undertake once more such a wearisome and protracted journey was very unusual, and was thought something dreadful by all who heard of it. "You will feel as if you were always on the road," Miss Jean said; and she felt an inclination to blame her sister who thought that the pleasure of her dying mistress was worth the great disturbance of Kirsteen's life which must result. "What good will it do her, a dying woman? It will just disturb her when her mind should

be taken up with other things," said Miss Jean.

But it was perhaps natural that Kirsteen should not take it in the same way. She set off that evening, by the night coach, arriving in Glasgow on the morning of the second day. But this time Kirsteen remembered her kindred, and finding with difficulty the new house of Dr. Dewar, now a fine tall "self-contained" house with a main door and a brass plate upon it, suddenly appeared at the breakfast table where Anne and her doctor presided over a party consisting of two tall children of nine and ten, and two more set up in high chairs to reach the board. Anne was so much absorbed in the feeding of those small creatures that she scarcely observed the stranger, whom Dr. Dewar rose with an apology and a little embarrassment to meet, thinking her a patient improperly introduced into the domestic scene. An exclamation, "It's your sister Kirsteen, Anne!" roused the absorbed mother, at that moment holding a spoonful of porridge to the mouth of one of the babies. Anne had developed much since her sister had seen her last. She had become stout, yet not unpleasantly so, but in a manner which suggested the motherly hen whose wings can extend over many chickens. She wore a cap with plaited lace borders tied under her chin, encircling a rosy face which, though still young, was losing its higher aspect a little in the roundness of comfort and ease. Her soul was absorbed in the little ones, and in domestic cares. She thrust the spoon into the baby's mouth before she rose with a wondering cry of "Kirsteen!" And all the children stared, knowing nothing of aunts, except some on the side of the doctor who were not of the same kind as the fashionably dressed London lady in her black fur-trimmed pelisse. Kirsteen was still in something of the solemnity of her first mourning. Her natural colour was subdued, she was slighter than ever she had been, graver, more pale. Her hair once so rebellious was smoothed

away. She looked many years older, and very grave, serious and imposing. The two elder children looked at each other with mingled pride and alarm. This grand lady! The doctor was the only one who fully retained his wits. He put a chair to the table for the new comer. "You will have arrived this morning by the coach? And the first thing wanting will be a good cup of tea!"

"Yes, I will take the tea thankfully, for it is very cold, but what I have come for is Anne. There will be a post-chaise at the door in an hour."

"Are you going to run away with my wife?" said the doctor with a smile.

"A post-chaise!" cried Anne in dismay.

"Anne!—my mother is dying."

"God save us, Kirsteen!"

"I want you to come with me; take your warmest cloak; there will be no change of clothes necessary that I know of, for we will most likely be back to-morrow."

"To go with ye?" faltered Anne—"To—to Drummecarro, Kirsteen?" All the blood forsook her face.

"Where else? My mother is there, and she's dying, and crying for us."

"Oh, I dare not—I dare not! Oh, I cannot go with ye, Kirsteen! You don't know, you've got great courage—but me, I'm just a coward. Oh, I canna go!"

"My mother is dying," said Kirsteen, "and crying for you and me. Can we let her go down to her grave without a word? We've both left her in her life, and maybe we were to blame; but to leave her to die is more than I can do. Anne, you must come."

Anne fell back in her chair, her rosy face the colour of ashes, her plump person limp with terror and dismay. "Oh, I canna go! Oh, I canna leave the bairns! Oh, David!" She turned to him with a gasp, terrified by the blazing of Kirsteen's eyes.

"Well, my dear," said the doctor, "your sister's right and ye ought to go. But when ye get there," he

added, turning to Kirsteen, "have you any surety that they will let you in? To go all that way for nothing would be little good to your mother; and I will not have my wife insulted with a door steekit in her face—even if it is her father's door."

"I have this surety," said Kirsteen, feeling herself to tower over them though she was not very tall, "that I will see my mother, whoever steeks the door in my face, nor think twice if it was the King himself."

"The King's the first gentleman in the country," said the doctor shrugging his shoulders; "but your father?"

"He is just my father, Dr. Dewar, and Anne's father, and we will say no more; the question is my mother that never harmed living creature nor said an unkind word. How can ye stop to consider, Anne? Your mother! The more ye cherish your bairns the more ye should mind upon her."

"I think, my dear," said the doctor, "that it's your duty to go. It might pave the way to a reconciliation," he added, "which would be good for us all and good for the bairns. I think you should go."

"Oh, David!" was all that Anne said.

Kirsteen stood and looked upon them all with a flash of scorn. Was this the effect of marrying and being happy as people say? The little plump mother with her rosy face no longer capable of responding to any call outside of her own little circle of existence, the babies delving with their spoons into the porridge, covering their faces and pinafores, or holding up little gaping mouths to be fed. It had been a delightful picture which she had come in upon before at an earlier stage, when Anne had wept at her mother's name, and cried wistfully for a message from home, and longed to show her children. That had all been sweet—but now it was sweet no longer. The prosaic interior, the bondage of all these little necessities, the loosening of all other bonds of older date or wider reach, was this what happiness meant? Sometimes a

sudden *aperçu* of this kind will flash through the mind of one for whom those ties are forbidden and give a consolation, a compensation, to the fancy. But the thought only passed as swiftly as a breath through the mind of Kirsteen.

However when the post-chaise came to the door, Anne, who had been hurried into her black silk gown and cloak more by pressure of the doctor than by any will of her own, was ready to step into it with her sister. Kirsteen did not quite know how it was done. She would have retired from the conflict and left her sister with the children and their porridge, but Dr. Dewar was of a different mind. He had never given up the hope of having it fully recognised that his wife was one of the old Douglasses; and here there seemed to him an opportunity of bringing about that hope. He half led, half followed her, into her room, having himself summoned one of the maids to look after the children. "Ye must just put the best face upon it, Anne; your sister is right. It would be unnatural, and a thing that would be generally blamed if you did not try to see your mother. And as for your father he won't bite you whatever he does."

"Oh, David! he'll just say things that would make you tremble; he'll take me and put me to the door," said Anne crying with fright and reluctance.

"Nonsense, woman; and if he does you must just put up with it. You have a good home to come back to, and you will be none the worse, and ye'll have done your duty; but he'll maybe be much softened by the circumstances," said the doctor, "and there is no saying what might happen. It would have a very good effect if it were known you had gone to Drumcarro, and think what a fine thing it would be for the bairns. Take your warmest cloak, as your sister said, and my plaid to put over your knees. It will be a very cold journey."

"Oh," cried Anne, "I will just be perished, I know. And very likely

turned to the door in the cold, and never see my mother at all."

"Well, ye must just try," said Dr. Dewar, bringing her out of her room triumphantly and fully equipped. Anne cried for an hour, sobbing by Kirsteen's side over her deserted children and home, and with a certainty that everything would go wrong while she was away. "David will get no right dinners, and the two eldest will be late for the school in the morning, and the little bairns neglected all the day. There's no confidence to be put in servants when the mistress is not there. And most likely I will never get a glimpse of my mother, and my father will put me to the door."

"Oh, Anne, is that all you think of her that never was hard upon any of us—that always was kind—and suffering so long, weary in body and in soul?"

"You need not instruct me about my mother, Kirsteen. I am the eldest, and I am a mother myself, and who should know if I don't?" said Anne roused at last. Kirsteen was glad to accept the position of inferiority thus allotted to her on all sides. She was neither mother nor wife, nor ever would be so. The others took a higher position than hers. She acquiesced without a word, with a faint smile, and was thankful to be allowed to sit silent listening to Anne's querulous murmurs, and still more thankful when in the unusual movement and silence Mrs. Dewar dropped to sleep. The journey was doubly sad to her who had so lately travelled along the same road in the first force of her passionate misery. That seemed to be long, long ago, as if a dull subduing lifetime had passed between. The dreadful thing was to think of the long life to come, which might go on and on for so many years.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

"WHAT will ye do now?" said Anne.

Once more Kirsteen had left her

carriage in the village where so short a time before she had paused on a different mission. Every detail of that journey had been brought back to her by this. The six months had softened a little the burning of that first bitter wound. The calm of acknowledged loss had settled down, deep and still upon her life—but all the breathless excitements of the previous quest, when she knew not whether the only satisfaction possible to her now might be given or not, and saw in anticipation the relic that was to make assurance sure and felt in her breast the burning of the murderous steel—all these returned to her soul with double and almost intolerable force, as she retraced the same road. An ailing and feeble mother not seen for years,—who would not hasten to her bedside, weep over her failing days, and grieve—but not with the grief that crushes the heart? That anguish is soft, even after a time sweet. It is the course of nature, as we say. The life from which ours came must fade before ours. The light of day is not obliterated by that natural fading. Kirsteen had set out at an hour's notice, and was prepared to risk any encounter, any hardness or even insult in order to answer her mother's call. She was not reluctant like Anne, nor did she grudge the trouble and pain. But as she returned in thought to her previous lonely flight into these glens the acuter pang swallowed up the lesser. She had not spoken to her sister for a long time. Her recollections grew more and more keen, as in another twilight, yet so different, she again approached the glimmering loch, the dimly visible hills. Anne's unsteady grasp upon her arm brought her to herself.

"What must we do? We must just leave the chaise here, it can go no further. To drive to the door would frighten them all, and perhaps betray us. It is not a very long walk."

"Are ye going to walk? I am not a good walker, Kirsteen. And in the dark by that wild road? I never could get so far—Oh, I'm so used to

town ways now—I couldna take such a long, dreadful walk."

"Anne!"

"It would be far better to leave me here. You could send for me if I was really wanted. I'm very tired already, and not fit—oh, not fit for more. You're younger—and ye always was so strong—not like me."

"Would you like your bairns to leave ye to die alone—for the sake of a two miles walk? Would ye like them to lie down and sleep and rest, and you dying two miles away?"

"Oh, Kirsteen, you are very cruel to me! What can I do for her?" cried Anne. "She will have plenty without me."

It was no time for controversy, and as Anne trembled so that she could scarcely stand Kirsteen had to consent to take the post-chaise on, as far as was practicable without rousing the household at Drumcarro. For herself the chill of the wintry night, the cold freshness in the air, the wild sweep of sound all round her, in the swelling burn and the rustle of the naked trees and all those inarticulate murmurs of silence which come down from the heights of unseen hills, were salutary and sweet. When they paused at last upon the lonely road and stepped out into the blackness of the night with the lantern that was to guide them on their further way, that descent into the indecipherable dark, with all the roaring of wind and stream about them, had indeed something in it that was appalling. Anne, notable even to complain more, clung to Kirsteen's arm with a terrified grasp and listened among all the other storms of sound to the rolling of the wheels going back as if her last hope was thus departing from her. She that ought to have been warm and safe at home, putting the children to bed, sitting between the bright fire and the pleasant lamp waiting for David, to think that she should be here in a darkness that might be felt, with the burn on one side rushing like some wild beast in the dark, and the wind lashing the bare branches on the other, and only Kirsteen, a woman like her-

self, to protect her! A weak woman with a strong husband loses all faith in other women. How could Kirsteen protect her? She shivered with cold and terror clinging to her sister's arm but without any faith in it, and thinking of nothing but her own terrors and discomfort. Kirsteen on her side felt the stimulus of the cold, the tumult of natural sounds, the need of wary walking, and the responsibility of the burden upon her arm as something that subdued and softened the storm of recollections in her heart.

When they came suddenly upon the house of Drumcarro, almost unexpectedly, although the added roar of the linn coming nearer made them aware that the house could not be far off, Anne broke down altogether. The house was faintly lighted, one or two windows up stairs giving out a faint gleam through the darkness in honour of the approaching event. The house-door stood half open, the shutters were not closed in the dining-room. That air of domestic disarray, of the absorption of all thoughts in the tragedy going on up stairs which is habitual to such moments, had stolen into the house. The two wayfarers standing outside, both of them trembling with the strangeness of it, and fear and emotion, could see some one sitting by the fire in the dining room, with a bowed head. They grasped each other's hands when they saw it was their father. He was sitting by the side of the fire, bending forwards, his profile brought out against the dark mantelpiece by the ruddy glow. Even Kirsteen's stronger frame trembled a little at sight of him, and Anne, no better than a helpless lay figure, hung upon her sister's arm without power of movement, stifling by force a terrified cry. It would not have reached him in the tumult of natural noises outside, but she became more frightened and helpless still when this cry had burst from her lips. "Oh! come away, come away, I dare not face him," she said in Kirsteen's ear. And Kirsteen too was daunted. She abandoned the intention of entering by the open door, which had been her first

thought, and softly took the path which led to Marg'ret's quarters behind. Drumcarro heard the faint click of the latch as she opened the gate. He rose up and listened while they shrank into the shelter of the bushes. Then he came out of the door, and stood there looking out into the darkness with a faint candle showing his own lowering countenance to the watchers outside, but to him nothing. "I thought it might be the doctor," he said to himself, then went again to his seat by the dull fire. Anne was no more than a bundle upon Kirsteen's arm. She dragged her as softly as might be to the lighted kitchen behind, and looking in at the uncurtained window had the good fortune to catch Marg'ret's eye.

"Ye have brought her with ye," said Marg'ret half reproachfully when Anne had been placed in a chair before the fire.

"She had the same right as I. We have both deserted the old house."

"Oh, my bonny dear, but not the same. Kirsteen, my lamb—ye're all well, all well?"

Marg'ret searched with longing eyes the face that had so long been lost to her. Some things she knew, many she divined. She asked no question but looked and saw, and sighed and shook her head. The face was not the girl's face she knew; but she was not aware that the change in it had come within the last six months, the setting of the mobile lines with a certain fixedness, the mysterious depths that had come into the laughing, flashing, soft, fierce eyes she knew, the eyes that were made of light. Behind the light there was now a deep sea, of which the meanings were hidden and manifold.

"There's no question of me," said Kirsteen, meeting her look steadfastly, "but of my mother—"

"She is just herself," said Marg'ret, "just herself, poor body. The end is coming fast and she has little fear of it. Oh, I think very little fear; but taken up with small things as she always was."

"I will just go up—"

"Will ye go up? The Laird is about the house: and I am feared he will make some stramash when he sees ye. If ye were to wait till he is in bed? She has not said a word about ye all day, but I've seen her as if she was listening. She'll maybe have had some inkling from the Lord that her bairn was coming. She's real peaceable and contented," said Marg'ret, putting her apron to her eyes. "The Almichty is just dealing with her like a petted bairn. She's no feared—her that aye thought the grasshopper a burden—I ken fine that she has been looking for ye the livelang day."

"I will just go up," said Kirsteen again.

"And what am I to do with *her*?"

"Marg'ret, it's Anne."

"I ken weel who it is, Dr. Dewar's wife; you might just have let her bide with her bairns. What am I to do with her? It's no her mother she's thinking o'. The Laird will never thole her in the house. He'll just take her with his foot like a bundle of cla'es, which is what she is, and put her to the door."

"You will take care of her, Marg'ret," said Kirsteen. There was some justice in Marg'ret's description. Anne sat huddled up in a chair by the fire holding out her hands to it now and then, moaning a little. She had asked no question as they came in; perhaps she had heard the reply to Kirsteen's anxious inquiry. She was cold no doubt and miserable, and beyond all afraid. When there was any sound in the house she drew herself together with a shudder. "You will just take care of her, Marg'ret; let her lie down upon your bed, and keep her warm, and when my father has gone to his bed—"

"You will not wait for that yourself?"

Kirsteen's answer was to walk away. She went through the passage with her heart beating, and mounted the dark stair; there were few lights about the house, a solitary miserable candle at the top of the stair waving about in the wind that blew in from

the open door, and another placed on a small table near the head of Mrs. Douglas's bed. The invalid herself was quite in the dark shade with a curtain between her and this light. The whiteness of her worn face on the pillow betrayed where she was, but little more. But by the bedside with the gleam of the candle upon her soft, beautiful hair, and her face, which Kirsteen thought was like the face of an angel, stood Jeanie, Jeanie woman-grown, the beauty that all her sisters had expected her to be, radiant in colour and expression. For the first moment the light that seemed to ray from Jeanie was the only thing that Kirsteen saw. It was what she had expected. It gave her almost a pang of sudden exquisite pleasure by her mother's deathbed.

"Did ye hear somebody, Jeanie, coming up the stair?"

"It will be Merran, mother, with the things for the night."

"It canna be Merran. I know one foot from another though I'm a little dull, just a little dull in my hearing. Look out and see if your sister's come."

"Do you mean, Mary, mother?"

"No, I'm not meaning Mary. She's the one of all my bairns most like me, folk say—the same coloured hair—not like your red heads—and Alexander he was aye a brown-haired laddie. Eh, to think that I will never see one of them again!—and I'm just quite content, not frettin' at all. They'll be taken care of—they'll get wives of their own. When they get wives—or men either—there's but little room for their mother. But I'm not heeding—I'm just not heeding. I'm quite content. Look out, Jeanie, and see if that was your sister at the door."

Jeanie turned to do her mother's bidding and found herself almost face to face with a lady whom she thought at first she had never seen before. She gave a little cry of instinctive alarm.

"Is she there?" said the mother faintly from the bed. "I knew she would be there. Come to the other side, Kirsteen, that I may get the

light upon ye, and see it's you. Ay, it's just you—my bonny woman!—but you've changed, you've changed."

"No, mother—just the same Kirsteen."

"In one way, I dinna doubt ye, my dear; but ye've come through trouble and sorrow. I'm thinking there was something I had to say, but it's clean gone away out of my mind." She had put out her hand to Kirsteen, and was smiling faintly upon her from amidst the pillows. "I knew ye were coming—I just heard the coach rattling all the day."

"But, mother, tell me how you are? That's the most important thing—you're easy, at least in no pain?"

"Oh, I'm just very easy. I'm easy about everything. I'm no tormenting myself any more. I aye told ye I would never live to see my boys come back. Ye would not believe me, but ye see it's true. One thing's just a great blessing—I'll be away myself before the next laddie goes."

"Oh, mother, never mind that; tell me about yourself."

Mrs. Douglas lay silent for a little while, and then she asked in her soft, small voice, no longer querulous, "Kirsteen, have ye got a man?"

"No, mother."

"It's maybe just as well—it's maybe better. You'll give an eye to the rest. Ye were always more like a mother than Mary. Give an eye to them. This puir lassie here; she'll be a wee forlorn when I'm away."

"Oh, mother!" cried Jeanie, with an outburst of vehement tears.

"There's something I wanted to tell ye—but it's gone out of my mind. Eh, when I think how many of ye have lain at my breast, and only the two of ye here; but it's no matter, it's no matter. I've aye been a complaining creature. Fourteen bairns is a heavy handful, and three of them dead. My first little girlie of all I lost, and then one between you and Robbie, and then—all of you weel in health, and like to live, but just thae three. But that's plenty to keep a woman's heart. I have a notion I'll

find them still little things when I win up yonder," said the dying woman, with a flicker of her feeble hand towards the dim roof. A faint, ineffable smile was upon her face. "She was Alison, after my mother," she said.

The two daughters, one on each side of the bed, stood and watched while this little monologue went on, Jeanie shaken now and then by convulsive fits of weeping, Kirsteen too much absorbed in her mother for any other sensation.

"So ye have no man?" said Mrs. Douglas again. "It's maybe just as well; you will be a stand-by for them all, Kirsteen, my bonny woman. I'm thankful there's one that is not married. You will just tell them all when they come hame that I knew I would never see them more, but just wore away at the last very easy, very easy and content. I'm waik, but just bye ordinar comfortable, awfu' light like, as if I could just mount up on angels' wings, ye mind, and flee—"

"It's wings like eagles, mother," said Jeanie, anxious for accuracy.

"Well, well, there's little difference. Kirsteen, she's very young, younger than you were at her age. Ye'll aye give an eye to Jeanie. She may have need of it when her auld mother's away. I've not been much protection, ye'll think, but still it's a loss to a woman bairn. Jeanie's my youngest and Alison my first-born, and yet Jeanie's a woman and Alison a little playing bairn at heaven's gate. Isn't that strange?" A little sound of laughter came from the bed. Never was dying so easy, so pleasant and gentle. The sand was ebbing out a grain at a time. Suddenly she roused herself a little, and put out again her hand to Kirsteen. A little change came over her face. "I hear your father's step coming up the stair. But ye'll no forsake me, Kirsteen—ye'll not go away?"

"Never while you want me, mother."

"It will not be for long," said the dying woman. Her gratitude was disturbed by a little alarm; she grasped Kirsteen with her shadowy hand, and held her fast.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"WEEL—how are ye now?" said Drumcarro, coming to his wife's bedside. His shaggy eyebrows were drawn together, so that his eyes gleamed small from among the manifold puckers round them. He was not altogether without feeling. He was sorry now that she was dying. He had never taken much notice of her constant illness before. His voice was still gruff and abrupt, and he had no kind things to say, but in his way he was a little affected by the fact that she was lying, this weak creature to whose presence and complaints he had been accustomed for so many years, on the brink of the grave.

"I'm just very comfortable. Never you mind me, Neil, my man. Just go to your bed, and if anything should happen Jeanie will give ye a cry. Your father was never a man that could do without his night's rest. And there's no need; I'm just as easy as I can be, and well taken care of." Mrs. Douglas was past the little wiles which women fall into when there is a domestic despot to deal with. She forgot that it was a sin against her husband that Kirsteen should be there. She turned her head from one side to the other with a smile. "Real weel taken care of—between them," she said.

Drumcarro lifted his head and gazed fiercely at the figure on the other side; the folds of his eyelids widened and opened up, a fierce glance of recognition shot out of them. "How dared ye come here?" he said.

"To see my mother," said Kirsteen.

"How dared ye come into my house?"

"I would have gone—to the gates of death when my mother wanted me. Let me be, as long as she wants me, father; she's so quiet and peaceable, you would not disturb her. Let her be."

He looked at her again, with a threatening look, as if he might have seized her, but made no other movement. "Ye've done less harm than you meant," he said; "ye've brought

no canailye into my house; ye'll just pass and drop with no importance, and have no mention in the family. Be it so. It's no worth my while to interfere; a lass here or a lass there maitters nothing, so long as there's no canailye brought into my house."

"Neil," said the mother from the bed, "we must just pray the Lord to bless them a' before we pairt. Fourteen of them between you and me—I've just been naming them a' before the Lord. Alison, she was the first; you were terrible disappointed thinking there might maybe be no more." Mrs. Douglas once more laughed feebly at this mistake. "And then there was Alexander, and ye were a proud man. And then Donald and William, and then Anne, my bonnie Anne, my first lass that lived—"

"Hold your peace, woman. Put out that name, damn her! confound her! She's none o' mine."

"And Neil that ye called Nigel, but I like it Neil best," said the low voice rippling on without interruption. "And syne Mary, and syne— But eh, it wearies me to name them a'. Their Maker just knows them a' well, pair things, some in heaven, and some in India—and some—. Just say with me, God bless them a', fourteen bonnie bairns that are men and women now—and some of them with bairns of their ain. To think all these lads and lassies should come from me, always a waik creature—and no a blemish among them all—not a thrawn limb, or a twisted finger, straight and strong and fair to see. Neil, my man, take my hand that's a poor thin thing now, and say God bless them all!"

"What good will that do them? I'm for none of your forms and ceremonies," said Drumcarro, putting his hands deep in his pockets. "Ye had better try and get some sleep."

"I'll get plenty sleep by and by. Kirsteen, I would like to turn upon my side, to see your father's face. Neil, ye've been a good man to me."

He started a little, evidently not expecting this praise.

"On the whole," said the dying

woman. "I was a silly thing when I was young, but the bairns were always a great pleasure. But you're a dour man, Neil—ye canna forgive nor forget. Kirsteen, that ye put your curse upon, she'll be the stand-by for the whole house. Mind you what I say. She'll have no man, and she'll be the stand-by—"

"No man will ever have her, ye mean. She'll just live and die an auld maid," said Drumcarro, with a hoarse laugh.

"She'll be the stand-by," said Mrs. Douglas. "And maybe my poor Anne —" She paid no attention to the interruption he made. "I would not wonder," she said with a faint smile, "if my poor Anne— Eh, I would like to see her little bairns, Kirsteen. Why are they not here?"

"If one of the confounded set comes to my door—"

"Oh, father," cried Kirsteen, "hold your peace, and let her be."

"That minds me," said the dying woman, "give me your hand, Neil—or rather take a hold of mine, for I'm very waik—like the time we were marriet. Ay, that's the way." Though she was so weak her faint fingers closed over the hard hand that unwillingly humoured her whim, and took hers. "Now," she said, "ye know it's the man that's the priest and king in his own house. I'll just say the amen. Neil, God bless them a' every one, and all belonging to them, for Jesus Christ's sake, amen—amen! that's for His Son's sake, ye know, in whom He is ever well pleased. Amen! And many thanks to ye, my man, for doing my last bidding. The Lord bless them a', and all belonging to them, in heaven and in earth, and the far places of the earth, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen!"

Drumcarro said no more, his rugged countenance lowered like a thunder cloud, yet there were workings in the muscles of the weather-beaten cheeks and throat half covered with grizzled hair. He drew his hand out of hers, and looked for a moment at the marks of the weak fingers which had so

closed upon it, leaving an impress which died out as he gazed, like the fingers themselves disappearing out of sight.

"Now we'll all go to our beds," said the faint voice cheerfully. "I'm real glad we've just had that moment; for the man's the priest—the man's the priest. I just said, amen—ye all heard me, just amen. Neil, my man, go away to your bed."

He hesitated a moment, then turned away. "Ye can give me a cry if there's any change," he said to Jeanie as he passed; and then they could hear his heavy steps going slowly along the passage, stopping for a moment to blow out the flickering candle, and then the closing of his door.

"I'm going to my bed, too. I'm real happy and easy, and just ready for a sleep. Was it no a grand thing to get your father in such a good key, and hear him bless them all?" said the patient with a little proud flutter of joy, and then her eyes closed like the eyes of a child. Kirsteen sent her younger sister also to bed, and made what arrangements she could for the comfort and quiet of the dying woman. Many of the appliances of nursing did not exist in those days, but affection and good sense are perhaps after all the best appliances.

She sat down by the bedside, with a strange sensation as if she were in a dream. The peacefulness about her was wonderful, so different from anything she had expected. She had feared to find her mother as querulous and wailing as ever, and to have probably a struggle over her bed; possibly to be expelled from the house. Instead of this, all was quiet; everything given over into her hands. She sat going over the wonderful things that had happened since she had left the place, her terror of the step she had felt herself bound to take, her trembling helplessness, the sustenance of her sweet and tender hope. And now that hope was gone for ever, and all dreams, and every inspiring expectation. Her life was blank, though so

full—no hidden heart in it any longer. She would be the stand-by of her family, "That I will!" Kirsteen said to herself; the same words she had said to him when he had whispered, "Will ye wait?" She remembered this too with a forlorn sense of her own life as of a thing apart, which went on shaping itself different from all anticipations. She to be the stand-by of the family who had fled from it so helpless and unfriended! And she to have that dim blank before her, with no light ever to come out of it, whose heart had been fixed so early upon such a hope! Perhaps the second pledge might end too in unfulfilment like the first. At least she would have soothed the conclusion of her mother's fading life.

It was in the middle of the night that Anne was introduced to her mother's bedside. She had fallen asleep in Marg'ret's bed, and had not awakened for hours, sleeping the heavy sleep of fatigue and unaccustomed excessive emotion. To travel in a post-chaise all day, to take a terrible walk in the dark with the light of a lantern, she who was accustomed to Glasgow streets, to lie down to sleep fully dressed on a strange bed, she who was used to retire punctually to rest at ten o'clock, with the baby in its cradle beside her, and her husband to see that all was right! When Anne woke and realised all the horrors of her position, come here to attend a death-bed (of which, as of other painful things, she had a great terror), and with the risk of being seen and seized by her father, perhaps exposed to personal violence, perhaps turned out into the dark night—and everything she was used to out of her reach—her sensations were almost those of despair. If it had not been for the superadded horrors of the dark road, she would have stolen out of the house, and escaped. But she dared not alone face the darkness and solitude, and the raging burn and roaring wind, which were like two wild beasts on either side of the way. She thought of David sleeping quietly at home, and

all the children in their beds, with a wild pang of mingled longing and injury. They could sleep while she was surrounded by these terrors; and David had made her come in spite of herself, in spite of her certainty that it would kill her. She got up in the wildest feverish nervousness and misery, and looked at herself in Marg'ret's little looking-glass—a wild, pale, red-eyed, dishevelled creature, so entirely unlike Mrs. Doctor Dewar. Oh, what should she do? The terrors of the cowardly and ignoble are perhaps more dreadful than anything that can be experienced by minds more highly endowed. No barrier of reason or possibility appeared to Anne to limit the horrors that might happen to her. She might be murdered there, for anything she knew.

And it was with the greatest difficulty that she was got up stairs. She was afraid of everything, afraid of the creak of the stairs, of her father's door lest it should open upon her suddenly, and of her mother's death-bed. Anne was terribly afraid of death—always with a personal terror lest she should see or hear something ghastly and dreadful. "Oh, Kirsteen, it will just kill me," she said. "What will kill ye?" cried Kirsteen in indignation. "It is just a sight for the angels." But Anne was beyond the verge of such consolation. She dropped down a helpless heap of clothes and tears by her mother's bedside, scarcely venturing a glance at the blanched and shrunken white image that lay in her mother's bed. And by this time the dying woman had wandered beyond the consciousness of what was about her. She smiled and opened her eyes for a moment when she was appealed to, but what she said had no connection with the circumstances about her. "Mother, it is Anne—Mother, Anne's here, Anne's come to see ye—Mother, have ye not a word for Anne?" "Anne, is that her name? No, my bonny dear, but Alison after my mother. She's the biggest of the three, and look at her gold hair like Jeanie's." The white face was illu-

minated with the most beautiful smile—the half-opened eyes had a dazzled look of happiness. She opened them faintly with the one recognition that remained in them. "Eh, Kirsteen, but it's bonny, bonny!" "Mother," cried Kirsteen with her arm under the pillow gently moving and changing the position of the sufferer, as she turned from one side to another. "Mother! one word for poor Anne!" Her mother only turned once more those dazzled faint eyes with the last spark of mortal consciousness in them to Kirsteen and smiled. She had gone out into the green pastures and by the quiet waters, and recognised earthly calls no more.

"Oh, Kirsteen, never mind, oh, never mind. Now that I've seen her I'll just creep away."

"Come here," said Kirsteen full of pity, "and ye can give her a kiss before ye go."

Anne dragged herself up, trembling and tottering. She would rather have dared the dark road than touch that white face. But what her sister ordained she had to do. She bent over the bedside with terror to give the required kiss.

Something had roused Drumcarro at that moment from his disturbed slumbers. He had thrown himself on his bed half dressed, being after all human and not without some feeling in respect to the poor companion of so many long years. Perhaps he had heard something of the progress of Anne and her supporters up the stairs. He came out now with a swing of his door, pushing open that of the sick room. The first thing he saw was the distracted face of Anne put forward reluctantly towards her mother, against the dark moreen curtains of the bed. She saw him at the same moment, and with the shriek of a wild creature at the touch of the slayer sank out of sight, prone upon the floor, keeping a despairing hold upon the folds of Kirsteen's dress. Scorn of the coward no doubt was in Drumcarro's mind as well as rage at the intruder. He made a stride across the room, and caught

her by the shoulder forcing her to her feet. The unusual sounds roused the dying mother. She struggled up, looking wildly round, "What was that, what was that? Oh, dinna make a noise, bairns, and anger your father." Then her dim faculties returned to their previous impression. "Neil, Neil—you're the priest—say it once more—the Lord bless them a' and all belonging to them, for Jesus Christ's sake, amen—for ever and ever, amen!"

She put her wasted hands upon her breast and fell back on her pillows. The end had come—and everything had now to give way to the presence of death. Drumcarro thrust his trembling daughter violently from him with a muttered oath, and all except Anne gathered round the bed. The solitary candle flickered with a faint light upon the group, Kirsteen on one side with her arm under the pillow to ease the faint movements of the dying, the father's dark and weatherbeaten countenance lowering over the bed, Marg'ret behind, and Jeanie more like an angel than ever in her white night-dress, startled by the sensation that had gone through the house, appearing in the doorway. A last gleam of light in the mother's fading eyes rested upon this white angelic figure. No doubt the departing soul took it for the guide that was to lead her to the skies.

Mr. Douglas put his hand, not without reverence, over the closing eyes. He took out his watch to note the time. To kiss the dead face, or make any demonstration of love or sorrow would have been impossible, and a contradiction of all his habits and tenets; but the man was subdued, and there was something in this presence which obliterated for the moment all violent impulses. He said aloud but softly, "Twenty minutes past three in the morning," and closing his big watch with a sharp sound which jarred upon the silence, turned away. He even laid his hand almost tenderly for an instant upon the golden head of Jeanie as he passed her, and closed his

own door with little noise. It was his only tribute to the dead, and yet it was a real tribute. No harsh sound nor violence could intrude there. Perhaps he was ashamed to have startled her, and thankful even in his arbitrary soul that she had not known what it was.

Some moments of absolute silence passed during which Anne did not know what to do. She had time to steal away, but was afraid to do so—not sure that her father might not be lurking, lying in wait for her outside of the door. The grip of his fingers on her shoulder seemed still to burn her, and yet she had not received any harm. And this was not all—for awe and superstitious fear and some natural feeling also kept her still. She might see some white image of her mother, more terrible still than the wrath of the other parent, if she ventured out of the shelter of human society even in the death-chamber. Tears were hot behind her eyes, waiting to burst. She did not dare to approach, to look again at the face out of which life had just departed. The only movement of which she was capable was to put forth a hand and grasp Kirsteen's dress, as at last, after that long moment of silence and homage to the departed life, the watchers began to move again.

How soon that has to be! A few inevitable tears, a sense of utter quiet and relief after the struggle, instinctive little cares which Marg'ret could not postpone, to close the eyes, to straighten the dead arms, to smooth the sheets in the decorum of death. Marg'ret's eyes were full of tears, but she knew well all that had to be done. "You must go and lie down, my dear, and leave the rest to me," she whispered. "All's done that you can do." And it was only then that Anne recurred to their minds, an anxiety the more, and that Kirsteen felt as she moved her sister's hold upon her dress.

Four o'clock in the morning, the darkest moment of the winter night!

The little troubled feminine party withdrew to the warm kitchen, the only place in the house where there was warmth and light, to consult what they should do. It had been Kirsteen's intention to leave her father's house at once as she had come, her duty being over. But Jeanie's anxious entreaty bursting forth among the tears in which her simple sorrow found relief, and a sense of the charge she had seemed to take from her mother's hand like some office and trust conferred, changed the mood of Kirsteen. Her father had endured her presence, her young sister needed her; Anne was her chief hindrance in these circumstances. But even for Anne the bitterness of death was past. It was all over, and she had sustained little harm; all that any one could ask of her now was to get away as quietly as possible; the worst was over; Anne was capable of enjoying the cup of tea which Marg'ret made haste to prepare. She even was persuaded to "try an egg" with it, as she had "a journey before her." It is true that for a moment she was thrown into fresh despair by the suggestion that Kirsteen was not to accompany her home.

"Oh, what will I do?" cried Anne. "Walk that awful way in the dark, and take up the chaise at the end, and all alone, with nobody with me? Oh, Kirsteen, if I had known, you would never have got me to leave my family, me that never goes a step without my man!"

"It's a great pity," said Marg'ret, "that you put Mrs. Doctor Dewar to all that trouble, Kirsteen."

"And so it is," said Anne. "I told her so; I said I was not fit for it, to be trailed away to the Highlands at a moment's notice. And my poor mother that was too far gone to mind, or to ask about my family. And what good could I do? But you might as well speak to the rocks as to Kirsteen when she has taken a thing into her head. And now what is to become of me?"

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE question how to dispose of Anne was finally settled by the evident necessity of sending Duncan, the man from the farm into the town for various necessary things, and to call at the merchant's and other indispensable errands. Marg'ret decided that he should take the cart, and convey Mrs. Doctor Dewar to the place where the post-chaise had been left, an arrangement to which Anne did not object, for Anne was one of the women who have not much confidence in other women, and she was very willing to exchange Kirsteen's protection and care for that of a man, even though he was only Duncan. She made her preparations for departure more cheerfully than could have been supposed, and even set out in the dark with Kirsteen and the lantern to walk a part of the way so that the sound of the cart might not be heard by Drumcarro, with resignation. They were interrupted, however, as they stole out of the house, by a sudden rush upon them of Jeanie who had been sent back to bed, but lying weeping there had heard the little stir of the departure, carefully as they had subdued every sound. Jeanie thought it was Kirsteen who was abandoning her, and rose and rushed to the door still in her night-dress to implore her sister to stay. "Oh! if ye will not stay, take me with you, oh, take me with you, Kirsteen!" she cried, flinging herself upon her sister's shoulder.

"Oh, Jeanie, whisht, whisht! you will make a noise and wake my father. I am not going away."

"Oh, take me with you, Kirsteen!" cried the girl too much excited to understand what was said. "Oh! dinna leave me here." She clung to Kirsteen's arm embracing it in both her own. "You would not leave me if you knew! Oh! you would take me with you if you knew. Kirsteen! Kirsteen!"

It was Anne who interfered with words of wisdom. "Are you out of

your senses, Jeanie?" she said. "Take ye away from your home, and your father's house? Kirsteen may be foolish enough but she is not so mad as that."

"Oh! Kirsteen," continued Jeanie imploring, putting her wet cheek against her sister's, rubbing herself against her like a child, "hear nobody but me! Bide with me, Kirsteen, or take me with you. I will just die—or worse—if I am left here."

It was not until Marg'ret had come alarmed from her kitchen to bid them, "Oh, whisht, bairns, or ye'll waken your father!" that Jeanie could be persuaded to silence, and to believe in her sister's promise to return. The sounds though so subdued still made a whispering through the hall, and an alarming movement that shook the house sounded overhead as if Drumcarro himself had been roused to see what was going on. This precipitated the departure of Anne, who frightened as she was for the dark road and the chill of the morning was still more alarmed at the idea of her father's appearance, and hastened out from the one danger to dare the other, almost with alertness pulling Kirsteen with her, with a clutch of her other arm. Anne's spirit was roused by the episode which had just passed. She was aware that she was not herself strong or able to move about unprotected, or take any separate step on her responsibility, but she had a great confidence in her own judgment respecting others. She almost forgot to think of the terrors of the dark in her desire to make Kirsteen see her duty in respect to Jeanie, and to set everything right. She panted a little as she spoke walking on in the darkness, with the lantern throwing a faint light upon the ground at her feet, but though it affected her breath, it did not affect her certainty of being able to give good advice.

"Kirsteen—ye will be very wrong—if ye yield to that bairn. She is little more—than a bairn. She is maybe nervish with a person dead in the house. You will say it

is weak—but I'm nervish myself. Kirsteen!" — Anne had made a longer pause to take breath,—“ye had ay a great confidence in yourself. But you see you make a mistake whiles. Like bringing me here. David—was just silly as well as you. He thought, if I came, it might mend—matters—and be good for the bairns. But I—was right ye see. When a person's dying—they've no time to think—about other folk."

"All that my mother thought was about other folk—if you call her children other folk."

"Ay, in a kind of a general way. But she never said 'Where's Anne? How many bairns has she—and is the doctor doing well?'—Which is what I would have expected. No that I did—expect it," said Anne panting. "Oh, Kirsteen, we'll be in—the burn—if ye do not take care! She never—asked for me, at all," Mrs. Dewar continued. "I might have been safe—in my bed—at home. A long day in a post-chaise—and now another long day—and I'll get back perished with hunger and cold—and if I havena an illness, as Marg'ret says—and just for nothing," said Anne—"nothing! for all you said—David and you."

Kirsteen said nothing in reply, but instinctively quickened her pace a little. She heard the rumble of the cart in the darkness round a corner which was to deliver her from Anne's wisdom and helplessness, the first of which was worse than the last. And after a while the gleam of another lantern, the horse's hoofs and jog of the cart guided them to the spot where Duncan stood, his ruddy face grave with sympathy. He made a little remark about the wae'ful occasion, and the need of supporting God's will, raising his bonnet reverently; and then Mrs. Dewar was helped into the cart and went rumbling away into the darkness, still relieved for a time by the gleams growing fainter and fainter thrown by Duncan's lantern from side to side.

The wind had fallen and the burn

ran more softly, as Kirsteen walked home. She was very tired, in that state of exaltation which extreme exhaustion and sorrow sometimes bring, as if lifted out of herself altogether into a clear, still atmosphere of utter sadness, yet relief. The active suffering was over, she was incapable of further pain, but unutterably sad and sorrowful, hushed out of all complaining. The darkness enveloped her and soothed her, hiding her from all the world so that she could go on, weeping all to herself with no one to ask why or how.

True loves I may get many an ane,
But minnie ne'er anither.

These words kept wandering through her mind involuntarily while the tears fell down, and her mouth quivered with something like a smile. The futile contrast now, to her who could have no true love but one, and no second mother! She went on very softly in the dark, as in a dream, feeling in her face the freshness of the mountain air and the turn of the night towards morning—silently weeping as she walked. The greater of her losses was altogether secret, a thing to be known of none. Neither of her sorrows was for the public eye. Her life, which was so far from this and so different, awaited her with labours and cares unknown to this solitude, and she had much to do with which no loss or sorrow could interfere. She was to be the stand-by of the family, she who had fled from it to find a shelter among strangers. She must not even sit down to weep her mother. Only thus could she allow herself the indulgence of tears. The darkness was sweet to her, wrapping her round, keeping all her secrets. The heavens did not open to show her any beatitude; the landscape which she loved was all hidden away as if it did not exist. Nor were there any ecstatic thoughts in her heart of reunion or heavenly rapture. There was a long, long weary road stretching before her, years that seemed endless going on and on, through which she must walk,

weeping only in the dark, smiling and busy through the day. Kirsteen made up her mind to all that was before her in that solitary walk, going towards her desolate home. In a day or two she would have left it, probably for ever, and gone back to a manifold and many-coloured life. The stand-by of the family! She had always intended this, and now there was consecration on her head.

The lights in Drummcarro shone blurred through the dark, a window here and there with rays of reflection round it hanging suspended in the night, no walls visible, a faint illumination for the dead. Duncan's wife had come in to help, and a silent, solemn bustle was going on, sad, yet not without an enjoyment in it. Merran went and came up and down stairs with an occasional sniff and sob, and the importance of a great event was in the hushed house. Save for a birth or a marriage there had never been so much suppressed excitement in Drummcarro—even Marg'ret was swept by it, and moved about, observing many punctilios, with a tremor of emotion which was not altogether painful. She had put the best sheets upon the bed, and covered the looking-glass with white, and put away everything that belonged to the usages of life. Kirsteen paused for a moment to look at the white, serene face upon the pillow, with all the white, cold surroundings of the death-chamber—and then went noiselessly into the room which had been her own, where Jeanie lay fast asleep, exhausted with sorrow and trouble, upon one of the beds. She undressed for the first time since she had left London, and lay down on the other. But she was too tired and overworn to sleep. She lay with wide-open eyes in the dark, thinking over and over all the circumstances through which she found herself again an inmate of her father's house. It seemed an endless time before the first greyness of dawn crept into the room, carrying with it a whole world of the past, beginning, as it seemed to Kirsteen, a new life of which she but dimly realised

the burdens and anxieties. There was her father to think of, how he would receive her now that the protection of her mother's dying presence was withdrawn. Whether he would allow her to stay—and what she could answer to Jeanie's cry of distress, "Oh, take me with you!" Anne was a fool and yet she had spoken wisely. The daughter who had herself escaped from home was the last who could take another away. Perhaps the bonds of nature seemed all the stronger now to Kirsteen because she had herself broken them, because even now she shuddered at the thought of being again bound by them. Even when it is but an interval of a few years which has made the change, a woman who has gone out into the world and encountered life is slow to believe that a girl's troubles can be so heavy as to warrant such a step. They were in her own case she may allow—but how to believe that there is anything in a father's power tragic enough to make life unbearable for another, or how in Jeanie's childlike existence such a necessity should arise, made Kirsteen smile with half shame of herself who had set the example, half amazement at her little sister's exaggerated feelings. It could be nothing surely but fear of her father's jibes and frowns. Neither of these things alarmed Kirsteen now. And who could be harsh to Jeanie—not even her father, though she was but a girl!

While the elder sister thought thus, the younger stirred a little and turned towards her. The daylight was still grey but clear enough to make the sweet little countenance visible. Jeanie's yellow hair was all decently smoothed away under her nightcap according to the decorous fashion of the time. And the little frilled cap surrounding her face made her look something between an infant and a nun, unspeakably childlike, innocent and pure to her sister's admiring eyes. But Jeanie's face grew agitated and quiet as the faint light stole over it and the moment of waking approached. She put out her hands and seemed to clutch at some-

thing in the air—"I will not go—I will not go—I will go with none but Kirsteen," she cried in her sleep. Then, her voice growing thick and hurried, "No—no—I'll not do it—I'll never go—no, no, no." Jeanie struggled in her dream as if she were being dragged away struggling with something stronger than herself. Suddenly she woke, and sat up in her bed with a dazed look round her, and trouble in every line of her puckered eyelids. "What is it, Jeanie?" She turned round and saw Kirsteen, with a sudden lightening of her countenance, as if the sun had risen: "Oh, Kirsteen, if you're there! nobody will meddle with me if you're there!" "What is it—what is it, Jeanie?" Jeanie looked round again as if still unassured. "I was only dreaming," she said.

And there was little time for further inquiries since Marg'ret just then came into the room. She was very tender to Jeanie but anxious to get her roused and dressed and sent down stairs, "to give the laddies, poor things, their breakfast." Marg'ret had restrained herself with a great effort that neither might be disturbed before the time after such a broken night. She herself had not been in bed at all, and felt it quite natural that it should be so, her fatigue going off with the coming of the morning, and a still excitement filling all her veins. The loss of the mistress was perhaps more to Marg'ret than to any one in the house; but Kirsteen too was more to her than any other. She would have a long time to indulge her grief, but not long to hear the story and enter into all the feelings of her child. She had restrained with what was a true self-sacrifice her eagerness and loving curiosity. When she sat down now by Kirsteen's bedside it was with a sigh of satisfaction and relief. "And now, my own bairn, the pride of my heart!" Marg'ret said.

The conversation lasted a long time. Their letters had been frequent for the habit of the time, once every quarter of a year at the least they had exchanged their good wishes and such

information to each other about the other as could be conveyed by "hand o' write"; but neither of them had any habit of letter-writing, and there was much to be added, to fill in the framework of fact which Kirsteen had communicated from time to time. Everything indeed had to be told from the time of her arrival in London until the present moment. Marg'ret sat crying softly holding her hands, keeping up a low murmur of commentary. "Eh, but I'm glad my sister Jean had it in her power," "Eh, but she's a fortunate woman to have ye!" "Eh, if I had but been there!" she exclaimed at intervals, pride and satisfaction mingled with an envy of her sister which Marg'ret's better feeling could scarcely overcome. "I am just an ill woman, full of envy and all uncharitableness. I would fain, fain have been the one. I would have held ye up in my arms, and let no harm come near ye! I couldna have seen your bonny fingers spoilt with sewing," she cried with outbursts of tears. But when Kirsteen came to the story of the last year, Marg'ret listened upon her knees, her head bent down upon the hands which she held clasped in her own, a few sobs bursting from her breast, her lips pressed in a passion of sympathy which had no words upon Kirsteen's hands. The story was told very briefly in a few words. And then that chapter was closed, and no more was said.

"What is it that ails Jeanie?" asked Kirsteen, after she had come to the end of her tale, and Marg'ret had resumed her seat by the bed. "Tell me what has happened to her; there is something on her mind."

"Hoots," said Marg'ret, drying her eyes, "there is little on it, but what is on most lassies' minds—most likely a braw marriage so far as I can see. There is a gentleman that is up in yon lodge on the hill above Glendyer. It's said to be for the fishing—but first it was said to be for the shooting—and my opinion is it's neither for the one nor the other but for our bit bonny Jeanie. It is just what I

always said, even to the Laird himself. She is the bonniest creature in all this country from Clyde to the sea."

"But she would not start in her sleep like that, nor cry and pray to me to take her with me, if that was all. And who is the man?"

"Not like Glendochart, though he's a clever gentleman and a real good man to her that has the wit to guide him. A young lad, long and straight and with a bonny black e'e—and a clever tongue, but leein' for he says very ceevil things to me. He's ceevil to every one about the place, and great friends with the Laird—and I canna tell what ails her at him, if there's anything ails her at him. She was just real pleased to see him till twa three weeks ago; and then she took an ill turn—but wherefore I canna say. Wha can say what whimsies come into a lassie's mind?—and I've been muckle taken up," said Marg'ret. She paused a moment, and if she had been a Roman Catholic would have crossed herself; the impulse was the same, though nothing would have more horrified a Scotch Protestant than to be told so. She paused, and in a low voice said, "Muckle taken up—with her that needs nae mortal's service mair—"

And there was silence between them for a moment, and thought, that travels so fast, stopped remorseful with a sense of compunction, feeling how recent was the event, and how swift was the current of life which had already begun to flow.

"You have not told me who he is?" said Kirsteen presently in a subdued tone.

"Well," said Marg'ret rousing herself with a smile of pride and pleasure, "his is a kind of what they ca' incognity at the lodge; but I'm thinking, though I'm not quite sure, that it's just one of the Duke's sons."

"One of the Duke's sons," cried Kirsteen aghast.

"Well, my bonny dear! And wherefore no? The Douglasses are as good blood as any in Scotland, if it were the Queen herself—"

"Oh, Marg'ret," cried Kirsteen, "my poor little Jeanie! Do ye think she cares for this man?"

"I make nae doubt ye are used to grander persons than that; but it's no just ceevil to call the young lord 'this man.'"

"Ye don't understand.—Oh! ye don't understand," cried Kirsteen, wringing her hands. "The blood of the Douglasses may be a very fine thing, but it will not make her a match for the Duke's son—Marg'ret, you that have so much sense! And what does my father say?"

"I mind the time," said Marg'ret, "when ye wouldna have said I didna understand. Maybe my sister Jean—oh, my bonny dear, forgive me I'm just a jealous fool, and I didna mean it. But there's naething in it that's hard to understand; a bonny lad that's young and ganging his ain gait—and he sees a bonny lass, that is just like a flower, the pride of the place. Is he to wait and reckon, will my father be pleased, and will my leddy mother be pleased? Set them up! Not to be owerproud of a Douglas in their house, and a beauty like Jeanie. The pride used to be on our side once," said Marg'ret, tossing her head, "if a' tales be true."

"It must have been a long time ago," said Kirsteen; "and my father, what does he say?"

"I never saw the Laird so father-like—no since the day when I put your brother Alexander into his arms, that's now the Cornel and a great man among the blacks in India. I mind the gleam in his face when he got his son, and thought upon all the grand things that would come with the lad-bairn. Ye ken yoursel he never heeded a lass he had. But when he sees my lord coming like a little colley doguie after our Jeanie, following her wherever she goes, there's the same look upon his face. I was the first to tell him," said Marg'ret with pride, "that it wasna just a bonny lass that bairn would be, but a beauty to be kent about the world. And now he sees it himsel. What your father

says?—He just says naething for pleasure and pride."

"Oh, Marg'ret—I fear, I fear, that this will be the worst of all."

"And what is there that's ill among ye, that ye speak of the worst of a' There's Mrs. Doctor Dewar just a very comfortable like person, that's done weel enough for hersel. She's a poor creature with little heart, wrapt up in her common man and her little vulgar bairns. But that is just a' she would have been fit for whether or no. And there's Liddy Glendochart that is a real credit to the family, and has travelled, and can knap English with the best—far better than you. And there's yourself, Kirsteen, that makes all the grand London leddies stand about. And where is the ill among ye, that our bonny little Jeanie should be the worst of a'?"

Marg'ret raised her voice unconsciously as she gave forth this flourish, with her head in the air and all her banners waving. But the sound of her own utterance brought her back with a shock to the reality of things. She gave a low cry. "Eh, to think I should forget myself and brag and boast—with her, just an angel of God lying ben the house."

And once more Marg'ret paid a little, hasty, hot tribute of tears to the presence, now so solemn, but which till now had counted for so little amid the agitations of the family. During those days of mourning at least the mistress could not be altogether forgotten.

Mary and her husband arrived from Glendochart in the afternoon of that day. She was very full of explanations as to how it was impossible to come sooner, and how the illness had gone on so long, she had no belief in its speedy ending. She went up dutifully to the death-chamber, and shed a natural tear or two and came down again with her handkerchief to her eyes. "I thought my mother would have seen us all out. I never mind of her anything but ill," she remarked, her ideas still being Scottish though her voice since her visit to London

had taken on what she considered an English accent. "We had got to think, Glendochart and me, that she would go on as long as any of us. It was a great shock. If I had thought there was danger, I would have been here."

Then there was a little natural family conversation and a few more natural tears. And Kirsteen gave her sister an account of the last hours which she had witnessed, which Mary listened to with due gravity and a little feeling, saying at intervals, "My poor mother!" "She had always a very feeling heart!" "She was always so proud of her family!" as occasion required. "And what did my father say when he saw you, Kirsteen? I did not think you would dare to come, but Glendochart thought ye would dare anything, and it appears he knew better than me."

Kirsteen repressed the spark of resentment which this speech called forth. "My father said little to me. He made no objection, but he was not kind to Anne."

"To Anne!" Mary cried with horror, looking round lest any one should hear.

"I brought her, that she might see her mother before she died. But I am not unwilling to allow," said Kirsteen, "that it was a mistake. My mother took no notice of her, and my father—I did it for the best, but she came against her will—and it was a mistake."

"Little doubt of that," said Mary; "but I'm very glad ye see it, Kirsteen, for it's not often ye'll yield to say ye have made a mistake. And it will be a lesson to you another time."

"Let us hope so," said Kirsteen. "There is one thing I would fain have ye do, and that will save me may be from making another. Mary, our little Jeanie is not happy, I cannot tell why."

"It would be very unnatural if she were happy, when her mother died this morning."

"It is not that. Grief is one thing and trouble is another. She has something on her mind. Will ye take her

back with ye to Glendochart, and take care of her, when I go away?"

"Take her back? And who would be left with my father, to keep him company. And the two callants, that have nobody to look after them?"

"Marg'ret would look after them. And my father wants no company. Jeanie will miss my mother more than any of us."

"You will not miss her," said Mary; "I well believe that. But me that came to see her every six months."

"Still that is different from Jeanie that has been always here. The little thing will be very solitary. There may be people about that are not company for the like of her. I could not take her, it would not be allowed."

"I hope Kirsteen you will put nothing like that into Jeanie's head. You to take her! There are many things ye must have forgotten to propose that."

"I do not propose it. On the contrary I ask you to take her. I am not easy about her. I would not like to have her left here."

"Do you think because you could not put up with your home that nobody can put up with it?" said Mary. "Ye are just far mistaken, Kirsteen. Jeanie is a contented creature, of a quiet mind, and she'll do very well and keep very happy doing her duty to her father. None of us want to be hard upon you, but perhaps if my mother had not had all the charge left upon her, poor body, she might have had a longer and a more peaceful life; when the daughters of the house just take their own way—"

"You did not stay long after me," said Kirsteen, out of patience.

"I was very different," said Mary holding up her head. "I had my duty to my husband to think of; a married woman cannot please herself. You,—it was just your own fancy, but I had to think of Glendochart, for the Scripture says ye are to leave your parents and your father's house."

Kirsteen was silent and said no more.

(To be continued.)

DE QUINCEY.

IN not a few respects the literary lot of Thomas de Quincey, both during his life and after it, has been exceedingly peculiar. In one respect it has been unique. I do not know that any other author of anything like his merit during our time has had a piece of work published for fully twenty years as his, only for it to be excluded as somebody else's at the end of that time. Certainly *The Traditions of the Rabbins* was very De Quinceyish; indeed, it was so De Quinceyish that the discovery, after such a length of time, that it was not De Quincey's at all, but "Salathiel" Croly's, must have given unpleasant qualms to more than one critic accustomed to be positive on internal evidence. But if De Quincey had thus attributed to him work that was not his, he has also had the utmost difficulty in getting attributed to him in any accessible form work that was his own. Three, or nominally four, editions—one in the decade of his death, superintended for the most part by himself; another in 1862, whose blue coat and white labels dwell in the fond memory; and another in 1878 (reprinted in 1880) a little altered and enlarged, with the Rabbins turned out and more soberly clad, but identical in the main—put before the British public for some thirty-five years a certain portion of his strange, long delayed, but voluminous work. This work had occupied him for about the same period, that is to say for the last and shorter half of his extraordinary and yet uneventful life. Now after much praying of readers, and grumbling of critics, we have a fifth and definitive edition from the English critic who has given most attention to De Quincey, Professor Masson.¹ I may say with

hearty acknowledgment of Mr. Masson's services to English literature—acknowledgments which can nowhere be more in place than here—that I do not very much like this last edition. De Quincey, never much favoured by the mechanical producers of books, has had his sizings, as Byron would say, still further stinted in the matter of print, margins, and the like; and what I cannot but regard as a rather unceremonious tampering with his own arrangement has taken place, the new matter being not added in supplementary volumes or in appendices to the reprinted volumes, but thrust into or between the separate essays, sometimes to the destruction of De Quincey's "redaction" altogether, and always to the confusion and dislocation of his arrangement, which has also been neglected in other ways. In former re-issues Messrs. Black, following the usage of all the best publishers, arranged their additions so that the possessors of earlier issues could complete them at will, and, so far as I know, De Quincey's own arrangement was entirely respected, except in the very harmless change of making the fifth volume the first so as to lead off with the *Confessions*. Such a completion is now impossible,² and though this is a small evil in comparison with the slight put on De Quincey's digestion of his own work, it is, I think, an evil. Still the actual generation of readers, when this edition is finished, will undoubtedly have before them a fuller and completer edition of De Quincey than even Americans have

1889-90. The first volume appeared in November last, and the others have followed monthly since.

² Some help has however been given by a subsequent publication of *De Quincey's Uncollected Writings*, by J. Hogg. Two vols.; London, 1890.

¹ De Quincey's Works; edited by David Masson. In fourteen volumes; Edinburgh,

yet had; and they will have it edited by an accomplished scholar who has taken a great deal of pains to acquaint himself thoroughly with the subject.

Will they form a different estimate from that which those of us who have known the older editions for a quarter of a century have formed, and will that estimate, if it is different, be higher or lower? To answer such questions is always difficult; but it is especially difficult here, for a certain reason which I had chiefly in mind when I said just now that De Quincey's literary lot has been very peculiar. I believe that I am not speaking for myself only; I am quite sure that I am speaking my own deliberate opinion when I say that on scarcely any English writer is it so hard to strike a critical balance—to get a clear definite opinion that you can put on the shelf and need merely take down now and then to be dusted and polished up by a fresh reading—as on De Quincey. This is partly due to the fact that his merits are of the class that appeals to, while his faults are of the class that is excused by, the average boy who has some interest in literature. To read the *Essay on Murder*, the *English Mail Coach*, the *Spanish Nun*, the *Cæsars*, and half a score other things at the age of about fifteen or sixteen is, or ought to be, to fall in love with them. And there is nothing more unpleasant for *les âmes bien nées*, as the famous distich has it, than to find fault in after life with that with which you have fallen in love at fifteen or sixteen. Yet most unfortunately, just as De Quincey's merits, or some of them, appeal specially to youth and his defects specially escape the notice of youth, so age with stealing steps especially claws those merits into his clutch and leaves the defects exposed to derision. The most gracious state of authors is that they shall charm at all ages those whom they do charm. There are others—Dante, Cervantes, Goethe are instances—as to whom you may even begin with a little aversion, and go on to love them more

and more. De Quincey, I fear, belongs to a third class, as to whom it is difficult to keep up the first love, or rather whose defects begin before long to urge themselves upon the critical lover (some would say there are no critical lovers, but that I deny) with an even less happy result than is recorded in one of Catullus's finest line. This kind of discovery

Cogit amare minus, nec bene velle magis.

How, and to what extent this is the case, it must be the business of this paper to attempt to show. But first it is desirable to give as usual a brief sketch of De Quincey's life. It need only be a brief one, for the external events of that life were few and meagre; nor can they be said to be, even after the researches of Mr. Page and Professor Masson, very accurately or exhaustively known. Before those researches "all was mist and myth" about De Quincey. I remember as a boy, a year or two after his death, hearing a piece of scandal about his domestic relations, which seems to have had no foundation whatever, but which pretty evidently was an echo of the "libel" (published in a short-lived newspaper of the kind which after many years has again risen to infest London) whereof he complains with perhaps more acrimony than dignity in a paper for the first time exhumed and reprinted in Professor Masson's edition. Many of the details of the *Confessions* and the *Autobiography* have a singular unbelievableness as one reads them; and though the tendency of recent biographers has been to accept them as on the whole genuine, I own that I am rather sceptical about many of them still. Was the ever famous Malay a real Malay, or a thing of shreds and patches? Did De Quincey actually call upon the awful Dean Cyril Jackson and affably discuss with him the propriety of entering himself at Christchurch? Did he really journey pennilessly down to Eton on the chance of finding a casual peer of the realm of tender years who would back a bill

for him? These are but a few out of a large number of questions which in idle moods (for the answer to hardly one of them is of the least importance) suggest themselves; and which have been very partially answered hitherto even of late years, though they have been much discussed. The plain and tolerably certain facts which are important in connection with his work may be pretty rapidly summed up.

Thomas de Quincey (or Quincey, for it appears that he invented or revived the *de*) was born in Manchester; but apparently not, as he himself thought, at the country house of Greenhay which his parents afterwards inhabited, on August 15th, 1785. His father was a merchant, well to do but of weak health, who died when Thomas was seven years old. Of his childhood he has left very copious reminiscences, and there is no doubt that reminiscences of childhood do linger long after later memories have disappeared. But to what extent De Quincey gave "cocked hats and canes" to his childish thoughts and to his relations with his brothers and sisters individual judgment must decide. I should say for my part that the extent was considerable. It seems, however, pretty clear that he was as a child very much what he was all his life—*emphatically* "old-fashioned," retiring without being exactly shy, full of far-brought fancies and yet intensely concentrated upon himself. In 1796 his mother moved to Bath, and Thomas was educated first at the Grammar School there and then at a private school in Wiltshire. It was at Bath, his head-quarters being there, that he met, according to his own account, various persons of distinction—Lord Westport, Lord and Lady Carybery and others, who figure largely in the *Autobiography*, but are never heard of afterwards. It was with Lord Westport, a boy somewhat younger than himself, that he took a trip to Ireland, the only country beyond Great Britain that he visited. In 1800 he

was sent by his guardians to the Manchester Grammar School in order to obtain, by three years' boarding there, one of the Somerset Exhibitions to Brasenose. As a separate income of £150 had been left by De Quincey's father to each of his sons, as this income, or part of it, must have been accumulating, and as the mother was very well off, this roundabout way of securing for him a miserable forty or fifty pounds a year seems strange enough. But it has to be remembered that for all these details we have little security but De Quincey himself—a security which I confess I like not. However, that he did go to Manchester, and did, after rather more than two of his three years' probation, run away is, I suppose, indisputable. His mother was living at Chester, and the calf was not killed for this prodigal son; but he had the liberty given him of wandering about Wales on an allowance of a guinea a week. That there is some mystery, or mystification, about all this is nearly certain. If things really went as he represents them his mother ought to have been ashamed of herself, and his guardians ought to have had, to say the least, an experience of the roughest side of Lord Eldon's tongue. The wanderings in Wales were followed by the famous sojourn in Soho, with its waitings at money-lenders' doors, and its perambulations of Oxford Street. Then, by another sudden revolution, we find De Quincey with two-thirds of his allowance handed over to him and permission to go to Oxford as he wished, but abandoned to his own devices by his mother and his guardians, as surely no mother and no guardians ever abandoned an exceptionally unworldly boy of eighteen before. They seem to have put fifty guineas in his pocket and sent him up to Oxford, without even recommending him a college (they could at least have made sure that he would not have gone to that particular one if they had), and with an income which made it practically certain that he would once more

seek the Jews. When he had spent so much of his fifty guineas that there was not enough left to pay caution money at most colleges, he went to Worcester where it happened to be low. He seems to have stayed there, on and off, for nearly six years. But he took no degree, his eternal caprices making him shun *viva voce* (then a much more important part of the examination than it is now) after sending in unusually good written papers. Instead of taking a degree he began to take opium, and to make acquaintance with the "Lakers" in both their haunts of Somerset and Westmoreland. He entered himself at the Middle Temple, he may have eaten some dinners, and somehow or other he "came into his property," though there are dire surmises that it was by the Hebrew door. At any rate in November, 1809, he gave up both Oxford and London, which he had frequented a good deal, chiefly, he says, for the sake of the opera of which he was very fond, and established himself at Grasmere. One of the most singular things about his singular life—an oddity due, no doubt, in part to the fact that he outlived his more literary associates instead of being outlived by them—is that though we hear much from De Quincey of other people we hear extremely little from other people about De Quincey. Indeed what we do so hear dates almost entirely from the last days of his life.

As for the autobiographic details in his *Confessions* and elsewhere, anybody who chooses may put those Sibylline leaves together for himself. It would only appear certain that for ten years he led the life of a recluse student and a hard laudanum-drinker, varied by a little society now and then; that in 1816 he married Margaret Simpson, a salesman's daughter, of whom we have hardly any personal notices save to the effect that she was very beautiful, and who seems to have been almost the most exemplary of wives to almost the most eccentric of husbands; that for most of the time he

was in more or less ease and affluence (ease and affluence still it would seem of a treacherous Hebraic origin); and that about 1819 he found himself in great pecuniary difficulties. Then at length he turned to literature, started as editor of a little Tory paper at Kendal, went to London, and took rank, never to be cancelled, as a man of letters by the first part of *The Confessions of an Opium Eater*, published in the *London Magazine* for 1821. He began as a magazine-writer and he continued as such till the end of his life; his publications in book-form being, till he was induced to collect his articles, quite insignificant. Between 1821 and 1825 he seems to have been chiefly in London, though sometimes at Grasmere; between 1825 and 1830 chiefly at Grasmere, but much in Edinburgh, where Wilson (whose friendship he had secured, not at Oxford, though they were contemporaries, but at the Lakes) was now residing and where he was introduced to Blackwood. In 1830 he moved his household to the Scotch capital, and lived there, or (after his wife's death in 1837) at Lasswade, or rather Polton, for the rest of his life. His affairs had come to their worst before he lost his wife, and it is now known that for some considerable time he lived, like Mr. Chrystal Croftangry, in the sanctuary of Holyrood. But De Quincey's way of "living" at any place was as mysterious as most of his other ways; and, though he seems to have been very fond of his family and not at all put out by them, it was his constant habit to establish himself in separate lodgings. These he as constantly shifted (sometimes as far as Glasgow) for no intelligible reason that has ever been discovered or surmised, his pecuniary troubles having long ceased. It was in the latest and most permanent of these lodgings, 42 Lothian Street, Edinburgh, not at Lasswade, that he died on the 8th of December, 1859. He had latterly written mainly, though not solely, for *Tait's Magazine* and *Hogg's Instructor*. But his chief literary

employment for at least seven years before this had been the arrangement of the authorized edition of his works, the last or fourteenth volume of which was in the press at the time of his death.

So meagre are the known facts in a life of seventy-four years, during nearly forty of which De Quincey, though never popular, was still recognised as a great name in English letters, while during the same period he knew, and was known to not a few distinguished men. But little as is recorded of the facts of his life, even less is recorded of his character, and for once it is almost impossible to discover that character from his works. The few persons who met him all agree as to his impenetrability, — an impenetrability not in the least due to posing, but apparently natural and fated. De Quincey was at once egotistic and impersonal, at once delighted to talk and resolutely shunning society. To him, one is tempted to say, reading and writing did come by nature, and nothing else was natural at all. With books he is always at home. A De Quincey in a world where there was neither reading nor writing of books, would certainly either have committed suicide or gone mad. Pope's theory of the master-passion, so often abused, justified itself here.

The quantity of work produced during this singular existence, from the time when De Quincey first began, unusually late, to write for publication, was very large. As collected by the author, it filled fourteen volumes; the collection was subsequently enlarged to sixteen, and though the new edition promises to restrict itself to the older and lesser number, the contents of each volume have been very considerably increased. But this printed and reprinted total, so far as can be judged from De Quincey's own assertions and from the observations of those who were acquainted with him (nobody can be said to have known him) during his later years, must have been but the smaller part

of what he actually wrote. He was always writing, and always leaving deposits of his manuscripts in the various lodgings where it was his habit to bestow himself. The greater part of De Quincey's writing was of a kind almost as easily written by so full a reader and so logical a thinker as an ordinary newspaper-article by an ordinary man; and except when he was sleeping, wandering about, or reading, he was always writing. It is, of course, true, that he spent a great deal of time, especially in his last years of all, in re-writing and re-fashioning previously executed work; and also that illness and opium made considerable inroads on his leisure. But I should imagine that if we had all that he actually wrote during these nearly forty years, forty or sixty printed volumes would more nearly express its amount than fourteen or sixteen.

Still what we have is no mean bulk of work for any man to have accomplished, especially when it is considered how extraordinarily good much of it is. To classify it is not particularly easy; and I doubt, myself, whether any classification is necessary. De Quincey himself tried, and made rather a muddle of it. Professor Masson is trying also, with what success we shall see. But, in truth, except those wonderful purple patches of "numerous" prose, which are stuck all about the work, and perhaps in strictness not excepting them, everything that De Quincey wrote, whether it was dream or reminiscence, literary criticism or historical study, politics or political economy, had one characteristic so strongly impressed on it as to dwarf and obscure the differences of subject. It is not very easy to find a description at once accurate and fair, brief and adequate, of this peculiarity; it is best hinted at in a remark on De Quincey's conversation which I have seen quoted somewhere (whether by Professor Masson or not I hardly know), that it was, with many interesting and delightful qualities, a kind of "rigma-

role." So far as I remember, the remark was not applied in any unfriendly spirit, nor is it adduced here in any such, but both in the printed works, in the remembrances of De Quincey's conversation which have been printed, in his letters which are exactly like his articles, and in those astonishing imaginary conversations attributed to him in the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, which are said, by good authorities, exactly to represent his way of talk, this quality of rigmarole appears. It is absolutely impossible for the author (to confine ourselves to the printed work only) to keep to his subject, or any subject. It is as impossible for him to pull himself up briefly in any digression from that subject. In his finest passages, as in his most trivial, he is at the mercy of the will-o'-the-wisp of divagation. In his later re-handlings of his work, he did to some extent limit his followings of this will-o'-the-wisp to notes, but by no means always; and both in his later and in his earlier work, as it was written for the first time, he indulged them freely in the text. For pure rigmarole, for stories, as Mr. Chadband has it, "of a cock and of a bull, and of a lady and of a half-crown," few things, even in De Quincey, can exceed, and nothing out of De Quincey can approach, the passages about the woman he met on the "cop" at Chester, and about the Greek letter that he did not send to the Bishop of Bangor, in the preliminary part of the *Confessions*. Rigmarole, however, can be a very agreeable thing in its way, and De Quincey has carried it to a point of perfection never reached by any other rigmaroler. Despite his undoubted possession of a kind of humour, it is a very remarkable thing that he rigmaroles, so far as can be made out by the application of the most sensitive tests, quite seriously, and almost, if not quite, unconsciously. These digressions or deviations are studded with quips and jests, good, bad, and indifferent. But the writer never seems to suspect that his own

general attitude is at least susceptible of being made fun of. It is said, and we can very well believe it, that he was excessively annoyed at Lamb's delightful parody of his *Letters to a Young Man whose Education has been Neglected*; and on the whole I should say that no great man of letters in this century, except Balzac and Victor Hugo, was so insensible to the ludicrous aspect of his own performances. This in the author of the *Essay on Murder* may seem surprising, but, in fact, there are few things of which there are so many subdivisions, or in which the subdivisions are marked off from each other by such apparently impermeable lines, as humour. If I may refine a little I should say that there was very frequently, if not generally, a humorous basis for these divagations of De Quincey's; but that he almost invariably lost sight of that basis, and proceeded to reason away quite gravely from it, in what is (not entirely with justice) called the scholastic manner. How much of this was due to the influence of Jean Paul and the other German humorists of the last century, with whom he became acquainted very early, I should not like to say. I confess that my own enjoyment of Richter, which has nevertheless been considerable, has always been lessened by the presence in him, to a still greater degree, of this same habit of quasi-serious divagation. To appreciate the mistake of it, it is only necessary to compare the manner of Swift. The *Tale of a Tub* is in appearance as darily discursive as anything can be, but the author in the first place never loses his way, and in the second never fails to keep a watchful eye on himself lest he should be getting too serious or too tedious. That is what Richter and De Quincey fail to do.

Yet though these drawbacks are grave, and though they are (to judge from my own experience) felt more seriously at each successive reading, most assuredly no man who loves English literature could spare De

Quincey from it; most assuredly all who love English literature would sooner spare some much more faultless writers. Even that quality of his which has been already noted, his extraordinary attraction for youth, is a singular and priceless one. The Master of the Court of the Gentiles, or the Instructor of the Sons of the Prophets, he might be called in a fantastic nomenclature, which he would have himself appreciated if it had been applied to any one but himself. What he somewhere calls his "extraordinary ignorance of daily life" does not revolt youth. His little pedantries, which to the day of his death were like those of a clever school-boy, appeal directly to it. His best fun is quite intelligible; his worst not wholly uncongenial. His habit (a certain most respected professor in a northern university may recognise the words) of "getting into logical coaches and letting himself be carried on without minding where he is going" is anything but repugnant to brisk minds of seventeen. They are quite able to comprehend the great if mannered beauty of his finest style—the style, to quote his own words once more, as of "an elaborate and pompous sunset." Such a schoolmaster, to bring youths of promise not merely to good literature but to the best, nowhere else exists. But he is much more than a mere schoolmaster, and in order that we may see what he is, it is desirable first of all to despatch two other objections made to him from different quarters, and on different lines of thought. The one objection (I should say that I do not fully espouse either of them) is that he is an untrustworthy critic of books; the other is that he is a very spiteful commentator on men.

This latter charge has found wide acceptance and has been practically corroborated and endorsed by persons so different as Southey and Carlyle. It would not in any case concern us much, for when a man is once dead it matters uncommonly little whether he was personally unamiable or not. But I think that De Quincey has in this re-

spect been hardly treated. He led such a wholly unnatural life, he was at all times and in all places so thoroughly excluded from the natural contact and friction of society that his utterances hardly partake of the ordinary character of men's speech. In the "vacant interlunar caves" where he hid himself, he could hardly feel the restraints that press on those who move within ear-shot and jostle of their fellows on this actual earth. This is not a triumphant defence, no doubt; but I think it is a defence. And further, it has yet to be proved that De Quincey set down anything in malice. He called his literary idol, Wordsworth, "inhumanly arrogant." Does anybody—not being a Wordsworthian and therefore out of reach of reason—doubt that Wordsworth's arrogance was inhuman? He, not unprovoked by scant gratitude on Coleridge's part for very solid services, and by a doubtless sincere but rather unctuous protest of his brother in opium-eating against the *Confessions*, told some home truths against that magnificent genius but most unsatisfactory man. A sort of foolish folk has recently arisen which tells us that because Coleridge wrote the *Ancient Mariner* and *Kubla Khan* he was quite entitled to leave his wife and children to be looked after by anybody who chose, to take stipends from casual benefactors, and to scold, by himself or by his next friend Mr. Wordsworth, other benefactors, like Thomas Poole, who were not prepared at a moment's notice to give him a hundred pounds for a trip to the Azores. The rest of us, though we may feel no call to denounce Coleridge for these proceedings, may surely hold that the *Ancient Mariner* and *Kubla Khan* are no defence to the particular charges. I do not see that De Quincey said anything worse of Coleridge than any man who knew the then little but now well-known facts of Coleridge's life was entitled to say if he chose. And so in other cases. That he was what is called a thoughtful person:—that

is to say that he ever said to himself, "Will what I am writing give pain, and ought I to give that pain?" I do not allege. In fact, the very excuse which has been made for him above is inconsistent with it. He always wrote far too much as one in another planet for anything of the kind to occur to him, and he was perhaps for a very similar reason rather too fond of the "personal talk" which Wordsworth wisely disdained. But that he was in any proper sense spiteful, that is to say that he ever wrote either with a deliberate intention to wound or with a deliberate indifference whether he wounded or not, I do not believe.

The other charge, that he was a bad or rather a very untrustworthy critic of books, cannot be met quite so directly. He is indeed responsible for a singularly large number of singularly grave critical blunders—by which I mean of course not critical opinions disagreeing with my own, but critical opinions which the general consent of competent critics on the whole negatives. The minor classical writers are not much read now, but there must be a sufficient jury to whom I can appeal to know what is to be done with a professed critic of style—at least asserting himself to be no mean classical scholar—who declares that "Paganism had no more brilliant master of composition to show than"—Velleius Paterculus! Suppose this to be a mere fling or freak, what is to be thought of a man who evidently sets Cicero, as a writer, if not as a thinker, above Plato? It would be not only possible but easy to follow this up with a long list of critical enormities on De Quincey's part, enormities due not to accidental and casual crotchet or prejudice, as in Hazlitt's case, but apparently to some perverse idiosyncrasy. I doubt very much, though the doubt may seem horribly heretical to some people, whether De Quincey really cared much for poetry as poetry. He liked philosophical poets:—Milton, Wordsworth, Shakespeare (inasmuch as Shakespeare was as he saw the

greatest of philosophical poets), Pope even in a certain way. But read the interesting paper which late in life he devoted to Shelley. He treats Shelley as a man admirably, with freedom alike from the maudlin sentiment of our modern chatterers and from Puritanical preciseness. He is not too hard on him in any way, he thinks him a pleasing personality and a thinker distorted but interesting. Of Shelley's strictly poetical quality he says nothing, if he knew or felt anything. In fact, of lyrical poetry generally, that is to say of poetry in its most purely poetical condition, he speaks very little in all his extensive critical dissertations. His want of appreciation of it may be some explanation of his unpardonable treatment of Goethe. That he should have maltreated *Wilhelm Meister* is quite excusable. There are fervent admirers of Goethe at his best who acknowledge most fully the presence in *Wilhelm* of the two worst characteristics of German life and literature, bad taste and tediousness. But it is not excusable that much later, and indeed at the very height of his literary powers and practice, he should have written the article in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* on the author of *Faust*, of *Egmont*, and above all of the shorter poems. Here he deliberately assents to the opinion that *Werther* is "superior to everything that came after it, and for mere power Goethe's paramount work," dismisses *Faust* as something that "no two people have ever agreed about," sentences *Egmont* as "violating the historic truth of character," and mentions not a single one of those lyrics, unmatched, or rather only matched by Heine, in the language, by which Goethe first gave German rank with the great poetic tongues. His severity on Swift is connected with his special "will-worship" of ornate style, of which more presently, and in general it may be said that De Quincey's extremely logical disposition of mind was rather a snare to him in his criticism. He was constantly constructing general prin-

ciples and then arguing downwards from them ; in which case woe to any individual fact or person that happened to get in the way. Where Wilson, the "only intimate male friend I have had" (as he somewhere says with a half-pathetic touch of self-illumination more instructive than reams of imaginative autobiography) went wrong from not having enough of general principle, where Hazlitt went wrong from letting prejudices unconnected with the literary side of the matter blind his otherwise piercing literary sight, De Quincey fell through an unswervingness of deduction more French than English. Your ornate writer must be better than your plain one, *ergo*, let us say, Cicero must be better than Swift.

One other curious weakness of his (which has been glanced at already) remains to be noticed. This is the altogether deplorable notion of jocularity which he only too often exhibits. Mr. Masson, trying to propitiate the enemy, admits that "to address the historian Josephus as 'Joe,' through a whole article, and give him a black eye into the bargain, is positively profane." I am not sure as to the profanity, knowing nothing particularly sacred about Josephus. But if Mr. Masson had called it excessively silly, I should have agreed heartily ; and if any one else denounced it as a breach of good literary manners, I do not know that I should protest. The habit is the more curious in that all authorities agree as to the exceptional combination of scholarliness and courtliness which marked De Quincey's colloquial style and expression. Wilson's daughter, Mrs. Gordon, says, that he used to address her father's cook "as if she had been a duchess" ; and that the cook, though much flattered, was somewhat aghast at his *punctilio*. That a man of this kind should think it both allowable and funny to talk of Josephus as "Joe," and of Magliabecchi as "Mag," may be only a new example of that odd law of human nature which constantly

prompts people in various relations of life, and not least in literature, to assume most the particular qualities (not always virtues or graces) that they have not. Yet it is fair to remember that Wilson and the *Blackwood* set, together with not a few writers in the *London Magazine*—the two literary coteries, in connection with whom De Quincey started as a writer—had deliberately imported this element of horse-play into literature, that it at least did not seem to interfere with their popularity, and that De Quincey himself, after 1830, lived too much out of touch with actual life to be aware that the style was becoming as unfashionable as it had always, save on very exceptional subjects, been ungraceful. Even on Wilson, who was to the manner born of riotous spirits, it often sits awkwardly ; in De Quincey's case it is, to borrow Sir Walter's admirable simile in another case, like "the forced impudence of a bashful man." Grim humour he can manage admirably, and he also—as in the passage about the fate which waited upon all who possessed anything which might be convenient to Wordsworth, if they died—can manage a certain kind of sly humour not much less admirably. But "Joe" and "Mag," and, to take another example, the stuff about Catalina's "crocodile papa," are neither grim nor sly, they are only puerile. His staunchest defender asks, "why De Quincey should not have the same license as Swift and Thackeray?" The answer is quick and crushing. Swift and Thackeray justify their license by their use of it ; De Quincey does not. After which it is hardly necessary to add, though this is almost final in itself, that neither Swift nor Thackeray interlard perfectly and unaffectedly serious work with mere fooling of the "Joe" and "Mag" kind. Swift did not put *mollis abuti* in the *Four last years of Queen Anne*, nor Thackeray his *Punch* jokes in the death-scene of Colonel Newcome. I can quite conceive De Quincey doing both.

And now I have done enough in the fault-finding way, and nothing shall induce me to say another word of De Quincey in this article save in praise. For praise he himself gives the amplest occasion; he might almost remain unblamed altogether if his praisers had not been frequently unwise, and if his *exemplar* were not specially *vitiis imitabile*. Few English writers have touched so large a number of subjects with such competence both in information and in power of handling. Still fewer have exhibited such remarkable logical faculty. One main reason why one is sometimes tempted to quarrel with him is that his play of fence is so excellent that one longs to cross swords. For this and for other reasons no writer has a more stimulating effect, or is more likely to lead his readers on to explore and to think for themselves. In none is that incurable curiosity, that infinite variety of desire for knowledge and for argument which age cannot quench, more observable. Few if any have the indefinable quality of freshness in so large a measure. You never quite know, though you may have a shrewd suspicion, what De Quincey will say on any subject; his gift of sighting and approaching new facets of it is so immense. Whether he was in truth as accomplished a classical scholar as he claimed to be I do not know; he has left few positive documents to tell us. But I should think that he was, for he has all the characteristics of a scholar of the best and rarest kind—the scholar who is exact as to language without failing to comprehend literature, and competent in literature without being slipshod as to language. He was not exactly as Southey was, “omnilegent;” but in his own departments, and they were numerous, he went further below the surface and connected his readings together better than Southey did. Of the two classes of severer study to which he specially addicted himself, his political economy suffered perhaps a little, acute as his views in it often

are, from the fact that in his time it was practically a new study, and that he had neither sufficient facts nor sufficient literature to go upon. In metaphysics, to which he gave himself up for years and in which he seems really to have known whatever there was to know, I fear that the opium fiend cheated the world of something like masterpieces. Only three men during De Quincey’s lifetime had anything like his powers in this department. Now De Quincey could write English, and Sir William Hamilton either could not or would not. Ferrier could and did write English; but he could not, as De Quincey could, throw upon philosophy the play of literary and miscellaneous illustration which of all the sciences it most requires, and which all its really supreme exponents have been able to give it. Mansel could do both these things; but he was somewhat indolent, and had many avocations. De Quincey could write perfect English, he had every resource of illustration and relief at command, he was in his way as “brazen-bowelled” at work as he was “golden-mouthed” at expression, and he had ample leisure. But the inability to undertake sustained labour, which he himself recognizes as the one unquestionable curse of opium, deprived us of an English philosopher who would have stood as far above Kant in exoteric graces as he would have stood above Bacon in esoteric value. It was not entirely De Quincey’s fault. It seems to be generally recognized now that whatever occasional excesses he may have committed, opium was really required in his case, and gave us what we have as much as it took away what we have not. But if any one chose to write in the antique style a debate between Philosophy, Tar-water and Laudanum, it would be almost enough to put in the mouth of Philosophy, “This gave me Berkeley and that deprived me of De Quincey.”

De Quincey is, however, first of all a writer of ornate English, which for once was never a mere cover to

bare thought. Overpraise and mispraise him as anybody may, he cannot be overpraised for this. Mistake as he chose to do and as others have chosen to do, the relative value of his gift, the absolute value of it is unmistakable. What other Englishman, from Sir Thomas Browne downwards, has written a sentence surpassing in melody that on *Our Lady of Sighs*: "And her eyes, if they were ever seen, would be neither sweet nor subtle; no man could read their story; they would be found filled with perishing dreams and with wrecks of forgotten delirium." ? Compare that with the masterpieces of some later practitioners. There are no out-of-the-way words; there is no needless expense of adjectives; the sense is quite adequate to the sound; the sound is only what is required as accompaniment to the sense. And though I do not know that in a single instance of equal length—even in the still more famous, and as a whole justly more famous, *tour de force* on *Our Lady of Darkness*—De Quincey ever quite equalled the combined simplicity and majesty of this phrase, he has constantly come close to it. The *Suspiria* are full of such passages—there are even some who prefer *Savannah la Mar* to the *Ladies of Sorrow*. Beautiful as it is I do not, because the accursed superfluous adjective appears there. The famous passages of the *Confessions* are in every one's memory; and so I suppose is the *Vision of Sudden Death*. Many passages in *The Cæsars*, though somewhat less florid, are hardly less good; and the close of *Joan of Arc* is as famous as the most ambitious attempts of the *Confessions* and the *Mail Coach*. Moreover in all the sixteen volumes specimens of the same kind may be found here and there, alternating with very different matter; so much so that it has no doubt often occurred to readers that the author's occasional divergence into questionable quips and cranks is a deliberate attempt to set off his rhetoric, as dramatists of the noblest

school have always set off their tragedy, with comedy, if not with farce. That such a principle would imply confusion of the study and the stage is arguable enough, but it does not follow that it was not present. At any rate the contrast, deliberate or not, is very strong indeed in De Quincey—stronger than in any other prose author except his friend, and pupil rather than master, Wilson.

The great advantage that De Quincey has, not only over this friend of his but over all practitioners of the ornate style in this century, lies in his sureness of hand in the first place, and secondly in the comparative frugality of means which perhaps is an inseparable accompaniment of sureness of hand. To mention living persons would be invidious; but Wilson and Landor are within the most scrupulous critic's right of comparison. All three were contemporaries; all three were Oxford men—Landor about ten years senior to the other two—and all three in their different ways set themselves deliberately to reverse the practice of English prose for nearly a century and a half. They did great things, but De Quincey did, I think, the greatest and certainly the most classical in the proper sense, for all Landor's superior air of Hellenism. Voluble as De Quincey often is, he seems always to have felt that when you are in your altitudes it is well not to stay there too long. And his flights, while they are far more uniformly high than Wilson's, which alternately soar and drag, are much more merciful in regard of length than Landor's, as well as for the most part much more closely connected with the sense of his subjects. There is scarcely one of the *Imaginary Conversations* which would not be the better for very considerable thinning, while with the exception perhaps of *The English Mail Coach*, De Quincey's surplusage, obvious enough in many cases, is scarcely ever found in his most elaborate and ornate passages. The total amount of such passages in the *Confessions* is by no

means large, and the more ambitious parts of the *Suspiria* do not much exceed a dozen pages. De Quincey was certainly justified by his own practice in adopting and urging as he did the distinction, due, he says, to Wordsworth, between the common and erroneous idea of style as the *dress* of thought, and the true definition of it as the *incarnation* of thought. The most wizened of coxcombs may spend days and years in dressing up his meagre and ugly carcass; but few are the sons of men who have sufficient thought to provide the soul of any considerable series of avatars. De Quincey had; and therefore, though the manner (with certain exceptions heretofore taken) in him is always worth attention, it never need or should divert attention from the matter. And thus he was not driven to make a little thought do tyrannous duty as lay-figure for an infinite amount of dress, or to hang out frippery on a clothes-line with not so much as a lay-figure inside it. Even when he is most conspicuously "fighting a prize," as he sometimes is, there is always solid stuff in him.

Few indeed are the writers of whom so much can be said, and fewer still the miscellaneous writers, among whom De Quincey must be classed. On almost any subject that interested him—and the number of such subjects was astonishing, curious as are the gaps between the different groups of them—what he has to say is pretty sure, even if it be the wildest paradox in appearance, to be worth attending to. And in regard to most things that he has to say the reader may be pretty sure also that he will not find them better said elsewhere. It has sometimes been complained by students, both of De Quincey the man and of

De Quincey the writer, that there is something not exactly human in him. There is certainly much in him of the demonic, to use a word which was a very good word and really required in the language and which ought not to be exiled because it has been foolishly abused. Sometimes, as has also been complained, the demon is a mere familiar with the trickiness of Puck rather than the lightness of Ariel. But far oftener he is a more potent spirit than any Robin Goodfellow, and as powerful as Ariel and Ariel's master. Trust him wholly you may not; a characteristic often noted in intelligences that are neither exactly human, nor exactly diabolic, nor exactly divine. But he will do great things for you, and a little wit and courage on your part will prevent his doing anything serious against you. To him, with much greater justice than to Hogg, might Wilson have applied the nickname of Brownie, which he was so fond of bestowing upon the author of *Kilmeny*. He will do solid work, conjure up a concert of aerial music, play a shrewd trick now and then, and all this with a curious air of irresponsibility and of remoteness of nature. In ancient days when kings played experiments to ascertain the universal or original language, some monarch might have been tempted to take a very clever child, interest him so far as possible in nothing but books and opium, and see whether he would turn out anything like De Quincey. But it is in the highest degree improbable that he would. Therefore let us rejoice, though according to the precepts of wisdom and not too indiscriminately, in our De Quincey as we once, and probably once for all, received him.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

THE TRADITIONS OF GERMAN COLONIZATION.

THE family virtue of the House of Hohenzollern is the classical *Pietas*. Successive princes have undertaken not only to continue the glories of their ancestors, but to redress their wrongs and to repair their mistakes. The late Emperor William inherited the memories of a father crushed at Jena, of a mother insulted by Napoleon, of a brother who had refused the Imperial Crown of Germany. He lived to avenge his parents at Sedan, and to accept at Versailles the Crown from which his lazy brother had shrunk. His grandson, already master of the first of European land forces, has developed a passion for naval and colonial enterprise. Here, too, whatever the practical objections may be, the young Caesar takes up the thread of a family tradition. Two centuries ago Frederick William, the Great Elector of Brandenburg and the maker of Prussia, first displayed the Brandenburg flag at sea. It was maintained there, however poorly and even discredibly, for some thirty years, and then disappeared for more than a century. The details of this *fiasco* have received fresh interest from the modern attempts to found a Germany beyond sea. The young Emperor has himself spoken of the deep impression made on his mind by certain paintings of the Elector's ships of war, and of his own determination to succeed where his ancestor failed. In this paper I propose to give some account of the Elector's naval and colonial policy which has now furnished a precedent for the master of United Germany.

The Elector's failure was the failure of a strong personal initiative to overcome the tastes and prejudices of a whole people. The truth is that his maritime policy was an exotic. His subjects, who fought so obediently on

land against Poles, Turks, Swedes, and Frenchmen, would not take ship. His small state had hardly any sea-board. A great part of Pomerania was held by Sweden. In the Baltic the Swedish and Danish fleets exercised an inherited supremacy. No ship could pass the Sound without the leave of Denmark. But the Elector made light of all obstacles, natural and political. Educated in Holland, he had studied the methods of a seafaring people, and longed for wealth equal to that which was accumulated by their traders. Elector of Brandenburg at the age of twenty, he found himself in a country both naturally poor and wasted by hostile armies. At the date of the peace of St. Germain, in 1679, his territories had largely grown in extent, but long years of war had brought their inhabitants to the verge of ruin. Both trade and agriculture had practically ceased. Hence the main task of the remaining nine years of the Elector's life was to restore a degree of material prosperity to his subjects. First among his efforts in this direction was a scheme for the creation of a foreign trade by means of a navy and colonial settlements. His chief adviser in all maritime affairs was a Dutch adventurer named Benjamin Raule. A fugitive from his own country in consequence of certain buccaneering excesses, this man entered the Elector's service in 1675, and was at once employed in naval hostilities against Sweden. By immense exertions a fleet of twenty armed vessels was collected and manned with Dutch sailors and Brandenburg soldiers. With this force Raule threatened the Swedish and Pomeranian coasts, but effected little beyond capturing a few merchantmen, and co-operating with the Elector and his Danish allies in a descent on the

Swedish island of Rügen. In subsequent years an annual contract was made between the Elector and Raule, who seems, as the only practical seaman in his master's counsels, to have retained almost entire independence. The usual arrangement was that Raule should furnish the Elector with a certain number of armed ships at a fixed monthly rate of hire: he was to make good all damage by sea, while the Elector undertook to repair all damage received in battle; and he was to provide an auxiliary squadron, partly maintained at his own charges. Under this arrangement, in the year 1678 the Electoral squadron numbered ten, and Raule's auxiliary force sixteen ships. The operations contemplated by the partnership were of a multifarious character. Apart from the more or less regular warfare against Sweden, raids were planned against the commerce of all States at enmity with the Elector. From the ports of Pillau and Königsberg Raule sent cruisers to attack the merchantmen of France, Spain, or Hamburg, in the Baltic, in the North Sea, off the Spanish coast, and even in the West Indies. In the cases of Spain and Hamburg the Elector alleged a peculiar grievance. From each quarter he had been promised subsidies in money towards maintaining the war against France; but he had received little or nothing. The Spanish arrears alone amounted to one million eight hundred thousand dollars. He determined therefore to help himself forcibly to that which he could not obtain by regular means. In the case of Hamburg his policy succeeded, for the Senate of that city, having lost several ships by capture off the mouth of the Elbe, decided to pay their debt. The Elector's successes against Spain were, however, limited to the capture of a single ship, the *Charles II.*, which was taken off Ostende and sent to Pillau. The rich cargo of laces and linen was so largely embezzled by the captors that but little remained for the Electoral coffers. An

act of open piracy such as this, on the part of a State still nominally allied with Spain, infused some vigour even into the decrepit government of Madrid. The treasure-fleets from the Indies received additional protection, and the ships with which the Duke of Parma sailed to his province of the Low Countries secured the convoy of an English Squadron. Hence the Electoral privateers were reduced to the ungrateful task of witnessing the safe passage of one rich prize after another. From European waters they passed, in 1681, to the Gulf of Mexico in search of better fortune, but they captured only two small vessels in four months. On their return home they fell in with a Spanish squadron, which defeated them and drove them into the Portuguese harbour of Lagos. Attacks on French ships, were, as has been said, also within the scheme of the Electoral operations at sea, but they met with no success. The net results of this policy provided the Elector with food for reflection. He was gaining the character of a patron of buccaneers and pirates. The subsidies with which he supported Raule were barely covered by the value of ships captured. Further, it was notorious in Europe that the Brandenburgers had no taste for the sea, and that the Elector's policy was purely personal, and dependent for success on foreigners of doubtful character. The very wildest schemes were confidently submitted to him by one adventurer after another. One spoke of the wealth which might be gained by privateering expeditions against Turkish and Barbary ships. Another begged the protection of the Brandenburg flag for a free-booting squadron to be fitted out against Chinese and Japanese traders. Few sovereigns of a small inland country, exhausted by war and surrounded by active enemies and jealous allies, would have listened to such projects.

But the Elector had two sides to his character. Politicians knew him as the astutest of diplomatists, who changed his alliances as readily and as quickly

as his clothes. But projectors and inventors of all kinds found in him a patron for whom nothing was too visionary or chimerical. He is even known to have granted a large sum of money for the construction of a fortified city which was to be the seat of a learned republic, comprising the wisest men of all nations and of all departments of knowledge. Motives of especial strength were therefore required to make him desist from these attacks on European commerce, whence he had hoped to gain both money and increased respect for his flag. Dr. Stuhr, who wrote an account of the Elector's maritime enterprise fifty years ago in the dead period of Prussian naval history, thus sums up the situation :

Several of the European powers were highly incensed by the arbitrary manner in which the Elector sought to take the law into his own hands, and he therefore discontinued these naval enterprises which much resembled acts of piracy. Moreover, whatever good qualities Raule might possess, it is certain that he and his companions were adventurers, who sought to turn the Elector's early acquired enthusiasm for foreign trade to their own advantage. It is equally certain that the Elector would have succeeded better had he been able to stimulate the sluggish minds of his subjects and found support for his own views in their dispositions.

The year 1679, that of the peace of St. Germain, marked an epoch in the maritime affairs of Brandenburg. The Emperor despaired of success in the war against France and Sweden, and the Elector was unable to continue the struggle alone. His almost desperate appeals to the other German princes met with no sympathetic response. Indeed, the growing power and influence of Brandenburg had excited general jealousy. The Elector's great qualities as a general and statesman had been stimulated to the highest point by the war. He had recovered Pomerania from the Swedes, and his subjects, though their homes lay waste, had earned lasting fame in the field. Louis

the Fourteenth, on the eve of dictating a treaty which was one of his greatest triumphs, paid marked respect to the stoutest of his adversaries. He had fought against the Elector, he said, as the ally of Sweden and not as the enemy of Brandenburg.

The treaty itself imposed a bitter sacrifice on the Elector. All his conquests in Pomerania, including the coveted seaports of Stralsund and Stettin, were restored to Sweden. He was again reduced to the second-rate ports of Königsberg and Pillau, both situated inconveniently far to the east. But the Elector's mind was now relieved of the burden of war, and he turned with increased ardour to his maritime projects. He had in former years contemplated the formation of trading settlements in Africa and America, but he was hampered by want of means and the special necessities of the Swedish war. Now, however, being at peace with Sweden and secure of the countenance of Louis, he placed his naval affairs on a more regular footing. He bought some ships of war outright, and thus presented Brandenburg with the nucleus of her first national fleet. Others he hired from Raule on the old system. Raule himself remained free to act as the Elector's admiral and adviser-in-chief, and also to pursue his own private advantage under the Electoral flag. Further, an African Trading Company was instituted at Königsberg, and a Board of Admiralty at Pillau. The Company received a charter whereby the Elector's protection was assured to it for thirty years. The Brandenburg flag, moreover, secured equal rights with the English and Dutch flags in all harbours belonging to the French King, the Pope, the Grand Master of Malta, and the Grand Duke of Florence. And now Raule advanced a definite proposal to establish a Brandenburg colony or settlement on the coast of Guinea. The legitimate trade was monopolized by certain privileged

Dutch companies, but a swarm of smugglers, mostly Dutch, were anxious to obtain the shelter of the Electoral flag, in order to enter into open competition with the monopolists. Two ships, named the *Morian* and the *Arms of Brandenburg* were accordingly despatched to Guinea. Raule and his associates bore the charges, and the Elector allowed the use of his flag. Blonk, the commander, brought his vessel safely to land and signed a treaty with the local chiefs in May, 1681, at a point between Axim and Cape Three Points. The treaty secured for Brandenburg a trade monopoly, the right of erecting a fort, and the acceptance of the Elector's protection by the natives.

In July of the following year, 1682, Blonk returned to the coast of Guinea. He brought with him one of the Elector's chamberlains, Otto Friedrich von der Gröben, in the capacity of envoy plenipotentiary. He was furnished with a richly illuminated letter or charter from the Elector, ratifying the treaty of the previous year, and with a large number of presents for the natives. Landing at Acoda, near Cape Three Points, Von der Gröben found the local chiefs willing to grant a site for the proposed Brandenburg Fort, but before any treaty could be concluded a Dutch merchant arrived post-haste from Elmina and hoisted his national flag. Unable to contest the priority of the Dutch claims Von der Gröben sailed in search of the chiefs who had signed Blonk's treaty, but only to find that they and their tribesmen had been exterminated in a local war, and that the entire district had been ravaged. His force was, however, sufficient to enable him to commence the erection of his fort on a hill named Mampo, or Mampo, three leagues east of the Dutch fort at Axim. At the same time he held a palaver and concluded a treaty with the natives from whom he had learnt the details of the massacre. On January 1st, 1683, the Electoral flag was formally

hoisted on the hill, and saluted with a discharge of cannon from the ships. The hill itself received the name of Gross-Friedrichsburg, because, as Von der Gröben naively remarks in his narrative of these events, "The name of his Electoral Serenity is great throughout the world." On the very next day the Dutch, now thoroughly alarmed, made an abortive attempt to hoist their own flag on the hill. Building operations were commenced forthwith. Natives flocked in to be hired as workmen and to sell provisions. Blonk was appointed governor of the rising fortress, which soon received its first salute from an English ship. Von der Gröben, whose last service was to repel a native attack with a single cannon-ball, now returned home, as his health was failing. The remaining Brandenburg ship engaged in the local slave-trade. The fort when completed received the name of Gross-Friedrichsburg. It was of large extent, contained four batteries, and carried forty-six small cannon. A good harbour lay at the foot of the hill, and the surrounding soil was abundantly fertile. Another fort, named the Dorothea Bastion, after the Elector's second wife, was built at Acoda by agreement with the chiefs of that place, and armed with twelve cannon. Finally, in the year 1684, the relations between the tribes of the Guinea Coast and the Elector were further confirmed. A native envoy visited Berlin for the purpose and was treated with much distinction. All former treaties were ratified, the Elector's African Company secured a trade monopoly, and the Brandenburg protectorate was fully established.

Energetic proceedings such as these did not, as we have seen, pass without protest from the Dutch. The danger indeed was great. Every European smuggler and every discontented native looked for the support of the new comers against the privileged Dutch companies. The Brandenburg settlements became, like the Asylum of Romulus, gathering grounds for fugitive slaves, criminals,

and broken men of all sorts. Thus it came about that both during the Elector's life and after his death the Dutch were incessantly hostile. In the very first year they had captured one of the Elector's ships, the *Arms of Brandenburg*, and only restored it after five years of diplomatic wrangling. To them also the ultimate failure of the whole enterprise was not a little due.

In the year 1684 an accidental circumstance seemed destined to further the Elector's maritime plans to an unlooked for extent. He was hampered, as has been said, by the want of a first-rate harbour, situated well to the west and so free from the vexatious restrictions on navigation in the Sound. Chance now threw the coveted prize into his hands. The Estates of East Friesland had come to an open rupture with their widowed princess, Christina Charlotte, who was acting as regent for her infant son. Fearing the introduction of foreign troops in aid of the princess's cause, they appealed to the Elector for help, and he was not slow to give it. A convention was signed, and Brandenburg garrisons occupied the Castle of Gretsyl and the important sea-port town of Emden. An opportunity more welcome in every respect could hardly have presented itself. Not only did the Elector secure that very maritime base for which he had longed, but he gained a footing in Friesland which he, of all men, was best fitted to improve into absolute possession. His acts were now marked by the same characteristic rapidity. The seat of the African Company was removed from Königsberg to Emden. The East Frieslanders adopted the Brandenburg flag for commercial purposes, and received assurance of the Elector's protection in time of war. Moreover, they agreed to confine their trade in the Baltic to his ports. Large contributions to the funds of the African Company were made by the town of Emden and also by the Elector personally. He had already,

as we have said, acquired some vessels of his own, and now divided them into two squadrons, stationed respectively at Emden and Königsberg. Each of these was further strengthened by an auxiliary force held in readiness by Raule. Every species of activity was now displayed. English trade was invited to Emden, and merchants suffering from the religious persecutions of James the Second were made acquainted with the advantages of settling in the Elector's States. One Von Besser likewise visited England to study our navigation laws and commercial methods. A scheme was broached for extending to English smugglers in the East Indian waters the protection of the Electoral flag. An arrangement was made with Denmark whereby a Brandenburg slave-mart was erected at St. Thomas in the West Indies. Further attempts were made to secure the possession of Tobago, to establish a trade with the Cape Verde district, and to effect a permanent settlement at Arguin near Cape Blanco. At the last mentioned point a fort was actually built in 1687, and armed with thirty cannon. These projects were successively urged on the Elector by Raule, who retained the greatest influence over him to the end of his life. But the East Frieslanders very quickly tired of their new patrons, and the affairs of the African Company, which had looked so fair for a moment, soon entered on a decline which was never arrested. The sanguine Elector himself declared that every new ducat of Guinea gold cost him practically two ducats. Contemporary accounts show that the local management of the African settlements was both incapable and dishonest.

The year 1688 commenced with an explosion of Dutch hostility. An attack was made on the Brandenburg settlements in Guinea by a force commanded by the governor of Elmina. The bastion at Accoa and a few smaller positions were taken, their garrisons captured, and their merchandize de-

stroyed. Gross-Friedrichsburg was blockaded and a ship cut out under its walls. The news excited the most painful interest in the Electoral States, where these distant ventures had always been gloomily regarded. The Elector, stung to the quick, made strong protests at the Hague, but he died in this very year and before it was half over. With him fell the whole colonial edifice which he had so patiently reared. We have not the space to follow in detail the steps whereby the Brandenburg settlements were abandoned under his successors. Frederick the First of Prussia, the first king of his house, made what he could out of his dangerous heritage. But after numerous reconstructions and many overtures to English and Dutch capitalists, the African Company of Emden collapsed. Raule was repeatedly tried on charges of fraud, and died almost beggared in 1707. Frederick William the First was averse to colonial undertakings, and was, moreover, deeply ashamed of the piratical associations which had gathered round his flag. He offered his African settlements both to the English Africa Company and to the Dutch West India Company. The latter finally contracted to buy Gross-Friedrichsburg and Arguin for 6,000 ducats in the year 1717. An old claim to Arguin was at once revived by the French, who expelled the Dutch garrison so soon as it entered. Finally, in the year 1724, Emden itself passed for some years out of the power of Prussia; Frederick William's troops evacuated the town by order of the Emperor, and upon the joint petition of the Prince and estates of East Friesland.

At this point we may cite two authorities on the position, conduct, and prospects of the Brandenburg settlements while they existed. The one is John Barbot, agent-general for the English Royal Company of Africa (*Churchill's Voyages*, vol. v.); and the other William Bosman, chief factor for the Dutch at the Castle of St. George

d'Elmina (*Pinkerton's Voyages*, vol. xvii.). Barbot, writing in 1699, states that the exclusive privileges of the English and Dutch Companies were fearlessly infringed by smugglers of all nations. "Smuggling," he adds, "is capitally punished by law, but so many smugglers are Dutchmen that the penalty is never enforced." Of Gross-Friedrichsburg he writes:

For some time past their [the Brandenburgers'] servants and even their commanders, but not the soldiers, have been for the most part Hollanders, who, like their countrymen have always aimed at an absolute dominion over the blacks, but could never accomplish it . . . There have been seven Directors successively in about thirteen years (1689-1702) at Great Fredericksburgh, which shows how irregular the Emden Company's affairs have been at the coast ever since.

On April 8th, 1699, Barbot anchored off the place. "The Prussian General," he writes, "received us at his fort very civilly, but told us he had no occasion for any of our goods; the trade being everywhere on the coast at a stand, as well as by reason of the vast number of interlopers and other trading ships as for the wars among the natives." This very governor had just escaped capture at sea by one of these "interlopers," some of which carried as many as thirty-six guns. Bosman confirms Barbot's statement that the only real Brandenburgers in Gross-Friedrichsburg were common soldiers, the rest being Dutch. He adds that "some of the Guinea inhabitants joined the Brandenburgers in expectation of an easier government and looser reins, in which they were not mistaken, as the consequence evinced." The Dutch and English smugglers, according to the same authority, carried on nearly as much trade as the regular Companies of each nationality. In one and the same year the Companies exported 2,700 marks of gold and the smugglers 2,500.

From the year 1717 to the beginning of the Schleswig-Holstein troubles, in

1848 and 1849, Prussia had no maritime or colonial policy worth mentioning. Indeed Prussians sojourning in foreign ports were very generally sheltered by the British flag. Prince Bismarck has chronicled this fact with patriotic shame. But the Schleswig-Holstein question brought into prominence the naval impotence of Prussia and the other German States having a sea-board to the north. The preponderance of the Danes, often arrogantly displayed, excited the deepest irritation in Germany. Nor was the feeling unnatural, as the following story will show. A party of German students were on board a ship off the mouth of the Elbe. Some of them were singing Chemnitz's famous song *Schleswig-Holstein Meerumschlungen*, which gave poetical utterance to the German desire for the recovery of the kindred duchies. A Danish gunboat hailed the songsters and ordered them to be silent at once. Upon their refusal a shot was fired across their bows. How painfully must such humiliations have stirred the Prussian people, destined within some twenty years to conquer Denmark, Austria, and France, to absorb Hanover, and to command a sea-board stretching from Memel to Emden. It is certain that from this time the cruises of Prussian men-of-war for purposes of discovery and survey became more frequent. But the year 1870 came and there was still no Prussian fleet to defend the coast against a French naval attack. The French crews were, however, soon recalled to defend their own homes on land, and such efforts as they were actually permitted to make were wasted against slowly-shelving tracts of shore and harbours inpregnably armed. The successes of 1870-1 aroused in the German abroad a spirit to which the continued acceptance of foreign protection was highly distasteful. In the United States the German had hitherto discarded his nationality more readily than any other foreigner. But it was now noticed that new German commu-

nities, instead of melting into their American surroundings like ice in hot water, remained hard and intact as though the water had sustained a chill. At home Bremen and Hamburg had become Imperial ports, and great improvements were made in the ocean-service of the lines sailing from them, notably in the case of the North German Lloyd. More and more ships of war were laid down, though as yet mainly in foreign yards. A momentary shock was given to the whole of Germany by the disastrous collision of the *Grosse Kurfürst* with the *König Wilhelm* in 1878; but the naval revival went on, undeterred by the evil omen which the very names of the luckless vessels seemed to convey. Several times before his death the old Emperor William engaged in the unwonted task of reviewing ironclads and inspecting dockyards at Kiel and Wilhelmshafen.

The German occupation of Angra Pequena in 1884 showed Europe that a new competitor had entered the field of colonial rivalry. By his deference to Spain in the subsequent dispute over the ownership of the Caroline Islands Prince Bismarck made it equally clear that he considered no colony worth an international quarrel. German subjects, he declared, legitimately trading or settling abroad would always be protected by the whole might of the Empire. But the Empire itself was not going colony-hunting. German colonies would, like the English, have to trust to individual effort and natural growth, not, like the French, to artificial forcing and state patronage.

Since the accession of the Emperor William the Second in 1888 the German naval and colonial policy has passed into an acute, not to say aggressive, stage. The new sovereign's ambition seems to be to acquire the name of Sailor King, like his ancestor, our William the Fourth. Last year he sailed into the Solent with a German fleet, and accepted our highest naval honour. His ships have joined with ours in a

blockade of the East African coast off Zanzibar. In the Sultanate of Zanzibar itself, which swarms with British-Indian subjects, and where but lately any attempt to rival British influence would have seemed ridiculous, there is now a German influence, masterful, domineering, and using the language of conquest. German commercial interests there, as in other portions of the globe, seem to have become part of an Imperial policy to be furthered not by private merchants but by military bureaucrats. In Germany itself this change of method cannot be said to be generally popular, but it has the support of a blatant party with an energetic press. Prince Bismarck himself has incurred the displeasure of these ultra-patriots. When, both in Samoa and Zanzibar the truculence of German officials and adventurers was followed by native risings and the temporary destruction of all European influence, the Prince did not scruple to speak his mind. But the German bullies armed with whips and revolvers, whom he recognized as largely responsible for the native excesses, were hailed as heroes by the *Kolonialmenschen*. So, again, the Prince declared that the great object of his policy was to maintain a good understanding with England. But the "Colonial" party, as Deputy Bamberger reminded the Reichstag in January, 1889, has consistently reviled England and advocated attacks on English interests. Rising to the occasion their official organ in Africa had declared that "Germany had nothing to learn from England or any other colonizing nation, having a

method of handling social problems peculiar to the German spirit."

Such being Prince Bismarck's views, his dismissal from office was naturally hailed with joy by the *Kolonialmenschen*. Since his fall events in Africa have marched quickly. Only the other day the English world was congratulating itself, and receiving congratulations, on the rescue of the last of Gordon's lieutenants by an Englishman. The German Emperor declared himself honoured by the fact that the returning expedition had struck the coast on German territory. And now,—a wave of the wand, and all is changed! The rescued Emin Pasha has returned inland as a German official under the guidance of Major Wissmann, the leading advocate and exponent of the "forward" policy, who is to Germany much what Serpa Pinto was to Portugal. Among the objects attributed to the new partnership are the annexation of the great lakes, the seizure of the sources of the Nile, the re-occupation of that very equatorial province in which Emin spent his long exile from civilization, the division of Central Africa between Germany and the Congo State. The realization of any one of these plans would cut off the British East Africa Company from the interior and reduce its operations to a strip of the eastern coast. Making every allowance for that journalistic *chauvinisme* which Germany seems to have acquired together with the French *milliards*, one thing is abundantly certain—our general position in Africa is now more seriously challenged than it has been since the fall of Khartoum.

HAROLD A. PERRY.

CAN WOMEN COMBINE?

It is doubtless a wise and beneficent arrangement that the great body of living creatures upon this earth should be devoid of the power of acting in combination. Were mere brute force capable of self-organization and co-operative action man must long since have succumbed to the superior might of some of the so-called lower animals. But this incapacity is not limited to the brute creation. The lowest savages, though they may fight, or hunt, or live in communities, have always a tendency to fly apart, to form new and smaller communities; the tie binding any individual to the corporate body is easily snapped by some bait to personal cupidity, or vanity, or love of ease. It was not to the want of individual skill or valour on the part of his enemies that Cæsar attributed the success of his invasion of Britain, but to their inability to combine against him.

Civilized races have of course always possessed some measure of the power of acting in concert, and among these the most intelligent have undoubtedly been those who possessed this power in the highest degree. It is the same with individuals composing nations. *Esprit de corps* is better understood and has a more binding effect upon the educated and intelligent classes than it has upon the lower orders in a community. When the struggle for existence presses sorely the natural man is apt to snatch what personal advantage comes in his way, without any consideration of the consequences to his fellows. Nor is this to be deplored. Men living in these circumstances cannot possibly judge wisely even for their own class; yet their overwhelming numbers in every civilized community would enable them, if combined, to crush out of existence the

chosen few by whom and for whose sake they are saved from extinction, to utterly destroy the salt of the earth which serves to keep the huge carcase of humanity from putrefaction.

But many of the lowest classes are in these days learning the secret of combined action, or are having it thrust upon them by professional agitators, politicians, and philanthropists; and men who are not intelligent enough to see the ultimate result of their action, have acquired sufficient command over their merely individual propensities to face want and physical misery in obedience to the order of the leaders of an organization. It may be urged that the possession of so much self-control as is required to do this argues that the possessors of it no longer belong to the lowest classes, and are therefore not unfitted to judge of what is best for themselves and their fellows. This might in some measure be admitted, did the tendency to combine grow up naturally. But we know this is not so with our lowest classes. We know that it is only by a judicious mingling of cajolery with menace that a very large portion of the working classes is forced into organized action—a form of cajolery and menace, moreover, not by any means addressed to the higher intelligence or the better feelings of mankind. Almost any human animal can appreciate the personal pleasure of doing a half-day's work for a whole-day's wage, or of living in a house without paying any rent for it. Almost every creature can understand the misery of being waylaid and beaten by half a dozen of one's fellows, as well as of being shunned and tabooed at the public-house and other places of common resort. Yet it is by the admixture of this kind of pleasing

promises with savage threats that most of the combinations formed amongst the working-classes have in these days succeeded.

These are, however, men—all men! Women have hitherto generally stood aloof from combined effort. But now an attempt is being made, as spasmodic attempts have before been made, to organize female labour, female talent, female energy. Like all movements which originate without a body, and are artificial instead of spontaneous, these efforts have in the main failed, and will it may safely be predicted in the immediate future continue to fail. But why, it may be asked, should that which has succeeded where men are concerned fail when applied to women? Before attempting to reply to this question let me ask another. Have the Trades Unions and their outcome the strikes, succeeded—that is to say, have they permanently benefited the men they were intended to benefit? Is the condition of the labouring poor in these countries better, and not worse, since the workers have combined against their employers? It would be idle, perhaps, at the present time to expect any but one answer to this question. The British public has scarcely yet recovered from the fit of feverish enthusiasm (to periodical attacks of which, as we all know, it is subject) into which it was thrown last autumn by the great strike of the dock labourers in London. We took a side in that struggle between Capital and Labour, and our side gained the day, or seemed to do so, and we were well pleased. It would be unpleasant to acknowledge that we had no reason to congratulate ourselves upon that occasion, as we should have to do were we to admit that the combination of workers in general against their employers has not been of any real bene-

fit to our labouring classes. Let us defer answering this question therefore, and continue to congratulate ourselves upon the fine spirit that was shown by many of the labourers, the sympathy and kindly feeling manifested by society at large during the whole period of the strike. In ten or fifteen years we shall be better able to judge of the value of that victory of Labour.

It is hardly likely that our labour-market will be affected to any serious extent by the conclusions of the Berlin Conference. Were it possible to establish any kind of international legislation on the subject of labour there would still remain numberless difficulties arising from the different habits of different nations, the unequal cost of living in various countries, &c. The poor Polish or German Jew counts himself well off on the pittance that would barely keep an Englishman alive. Until our working-classes have learned some of the thrifty and industrious habits of Continental nations they will never be able to compete with them in certain branches of production.

The thrifty Scot and the potato-eating North Irelander have largely benefited by the strikes in the London ship-building trade, and the policy that silenced the sound of the hammer on the Thames has awakened it on the banks of the Clyde and the shores of Belfast Lough. Well—these are our fellow-countrymen—we may be glad for them to reap the benefit. But was this result intended or foreseen by the men who brought it about? It is seldom, too, that a trade forsaking any body of British subjects remains in these countries. Far oftener it is the foreigner who is the only gainer by our internal dissensions. The printers of London are, perhaps, the best organized body of workmen in the kingdom, and no doubt the trade of printer is still a good one even in England. But how many English printers are there in proportion to our population and the amount of printed matter re-

¹ The action of the women in a recent strike in an East-End shirt factory is an interesting example of the peculiar disposition of the sex. The women struck, not on their own behalf, but to help the men who were employed in the factory.

quired by us? In this, as in almost every trade not demanding the actual presence of the worker in this country, the frugal-living, thrifty, industrious German takes a very large slice from the bread that should go to feed our own children. The German printer is found able to compete with the English printer even in the special department of the latter; and, in spite of being handicapped by the cost of transit, succeeds in driving him in many cases from the field. How far foreign competition in the printing trade may extend, it is hard to say. It would, for example, be interesting and instructive to ascertain what proportion of the Christmas and New Year's cards sold during the months of December and January have borne the stamp, *Printed in Germany*; of those that have come under the writer's notice about ninety per cent. were from the Fatherland.

But there is no need, alas! to multiply instances of the decline of our trade. While we were rocking ourselves to sleep in happy security that we were the Heaven-ordained manufacturers and traders of the world, other nations were awake and straining every nerve to teach us under what a delusion we laboured. Their efforts have been crowned with success. Not only has our trade in a great measure been wrested from us, but foreign artisans and labourers of every sort are rapidly pushing their British rivals aside. A few years since France saw the rank and file employed in one of her great public works entirely composed of foreigners—a strange and sorry sight for any country! Some persons who have an intimate acquaintance with the British workman think it not impossible that the experience of our neighbour may be our own before long, and that our next great metropolitan or national piece of work may fall into the hands of French, or German, or Italian working-men. It is well known that a number of Italian workmen were employed in the construction of the new Forth

Bridge. What, one would like to know, was the reason of this?

Still, so far as the men of the working classes, in general, are concerned, foreign competition has its limits. Living in Germany and France is in some respects dearer than in England, though the habits of the people enable them to be comfortable upon what is often wasted by the same class in these countries. The great drain upon the male population by the military system of the Continent also tends to increase the price of men's labour, so that although the population of Germany, especially among the working classes, increases rapidly, the strain of this is not felt by them as it is here. Since three years are taken out of every workman's life by the military authorities, the actual working population is considerably reduced on the Continent; this must affect the cost of production there, and, as a consequence, the extent to which foreign competition is to be dreaded by English workers.

But with regard to both home and foreign competition women are in a much worse position, a position moreover not likely to be favourably affected by any international regulations. Working women, like working men, fall naturally into the two great classes of skilled and unskilled labourers. In the existing condition of the former there is little to cause anxiety, except its numerical weakness. Parents in these countries are unfortunately rather negligent of their duty towards their daughters; few girls are subjected to the discipline, or afforded the training that is in almost every rank given to their brothers. Odd jobs in the lowest classes, and a little amateur sewing and housework in the classes rather higher in the social scale, fill up the years that ought to be employed in giving a girl some kind of practical outfit with which to start in life. Even when taught a trade, such as millinery or dressmaking, the laws which bind the apprentice to her employer are too lax to make it worth

while for the latter to concern herself greatly with the girl's training. Much of her day is passed in going on errands, and, although this may be a healthful arrangement, it scarcely adds to her knowledge or skill. In the work-room, she is often too careless and ignorant to be entrusted with anything but the most elementary part of her trade. Not unfrequently, when her time is served, she knows little more than when she entered upon her apprenticeship. But even this modicum of training is valuable, and the girl who has enjoyed it is in a fairly independent position, provided she remain unmarried, for the rest of her life. Skilled manual labour among women, as among men, is highly prized and well paid for at the present day, as may be seen by the continuous demand for dressmakers and milliners in the advertising columns of the daily papers. And this is so without any organization whatsoever. Competent seamstresses, mantle-cutters, fitters, bodice-hands, bonnet-trimmers, are all able to command a fair price for their labour, and their employers have chiefly to complain that the supply is so limited. Indeed, such is the price demanded at the present time for all this kind of work, that a new branch of feminine industry has been created by it. A school for imparting instruction in the art of clothing the female form divine, with due regard to fashion if not to beauty, has sent its teachers into almost every town of the kingdom, and almost every middle-class family boasts at least one *couturière* amongst its daughters. This is the natural result of the high prices asked by professional dressmakers; for woman, like the ratepayer, is generally poor, and her time is of little monetary value. Nevertheless, were a union of workwomen, who understand their business and can really work, considered desirable, the dressmaking and kindred trades could probably bear it for many years.

There are always numbers of women that have either no necessity, or no

inclination, or no time to make their clothes, and clever workers are pretty sure of having their services well paid by these. The same remark holds good of domestic servants. The really competent cook, or housemaid, or general servant, is in England one of the most independent and best paid of working women. Even the incompetent servant fares comparatively well, and a mistress after taking the trouble of teaching and training a young woman finds herself merely in the position of the tenant who is called on to pay an increased rent for the improvements he himself has made.

And why should this be? Because domestic service is the one employment which is most universally objected to. Perhaps it is not wholly unreasonable that women, who are emotional creatures, should object to making their homes in the houses, and passing their lives in the service of people with whom, however intimately connected, they are expected to have nothing in common. A girl naturally looks for companions, for sympathy, for some "life", while she is young, and the enjoyment of these is seldom compatible with the discharge of her duties as a domestic servant. So long as Englishwomen are ashamed or unable to do the work of their homes themselves—so long must the women who are willing to adopt domestic service as a profession be rewarded and decently treated. No strong combination of female servants could, at the present time, be resisted, though it is pretty certain it would eventually force a new class of workers into this employment, and might finally bring us back to the patriarchal mode of living, in which a very large share of the household labour was not only organized and overlooked, but actually done by the mistress of an establishment. But that time is still a long way off and, as remarked, servants, if combined as a Trades Union, could in these days almost dictate their own terms to their employers. Such a union has, however, scarcely ever been prophesied. It

is not necessary, people say, and fail to perceive that precisely in the proportion in which combination is unnecessary it is likely to be successful.

Who dreams of a Trades Union for daily and resident governesses, for the ladies who advertise, as part of their stock-in-trade, the fact that they are the daughters of a naval officer or the sisters of a clergyman? It is well known that if all the private governesses in the kingdom were to strike work to-morrow, the agitation would scarcely cause a flutter in a single household, and would certainly not improve the condition of the strikers. And why? Because the supply of governesses is far in excess of the demand, and is becoming more and more disproportionate every year; not because these ladies are entirely unfitted for the task of education, but merely because they are numerous. The best trained teachers in general seek places in public and other large schools; but such openings are few in comparison with the numbers desiring them. The ranks of private teachers have long been over-full, yet every year new recruits press in, while every year the great educational mill of the Continent turns out a fresh batch of teachers on our shores. The effect of this plethora of teaching stuff bears hardly upon thousands of honest industrious Englishwomen; yet no one supposes that either a strike or any other result of combination would be of service to them. But why do ladies admit this in the case of governesses and deny it in the case of other work-women?

The truth is, ladies understand the facts of the case in this matter. Benevolent women, whose hearts are deeply touched with pity for the unhappy victims of Capital in another class than their own, are the first to recognise the truth where ladies are concerned. "My dear, half of the girls at the present day are superfluous," is a not uncommon remark; and then, with a little sigh, you are told that governesses in general be-

long, in the opinion of the gentle speaker, to the great, melancholy army whose badge bears the inscription, *Not Wanted*.

"How did you manage to pick up such a charming and accomplished girl as that governess of yours?" an acquaintance of mine asked a friend. "Oh, very easily," was the reply. "I chose her simply because she was willing to come for no salary, and I could have had crowds of others, I believe, on much the same terms." "I am so tired," said a slender, delicate-faced, young creature to me one evening, as I bade her good-night. "I have been scrubbing Mrs. —'s floor," she added, by way of explanation; "the soot came down the chimney and made the room so dirty that Mrs. — could not sleep in it, so I had to clean it, for, of course, we could not ask any of the servants to do such work at this hour." This girl was the daughter of a professional man, and was employed as governess in a house in which I was visiting lately; it was nearly midnight and she had been at work from soon after seven in the morning.

If, then, it be true that, even in the case of persons possessing a moderate degree of skill in their trade or profession, numbers suffice to reduce the workers to a position little better than that of serfdom, how much more likely is this to be so when these are totally unskilled, as is the case of the unhappy women at the East End of London? Yet these are the women whom it is now sought to combine for their own protection in a kind of Trades Union. The intention is no doubt excellent, but the execution is fraught with difficulties, and the result, even if it could be managed, far from likely to benefit the majority of the workers.

Any organization of female labour must inevitably become either a small union of skilled workers, who do not specially require combination in order to get a fair wage, or else sink into a mere Charitable Society. This is true of women's work in a way in which

it is not true of men's. A very large proportion of the most miserable workers in this country are married women or widows. This implies, in the first place, that they probably have not always been entirely dependent upon their own labour for their support; and, secondly, that they have not pursued any one calling uninterruptedly.

By those who oppose the opening of certain trades and professions to women, it is often said: "The competition of women will inevitably lower the remuneration of the workers all round, and this will bear more hardly on men than on the opposite sex. What will support a woman decently will not support a man, who, in addition to being a more expensive animal, is expected to maintain a wife and a family of children." In the lowest classes this is only partially true; most of the women belonging to them are expected to do something towards filling the common purse. But a woman who has children and attends to them, who keeps her little home clean, washes for the family, sews and cooks for them, can do little other work. It is true that she is obliged to neglect many of these duties in order to eke out the pittance her husband provides her with; but some of them she cannot shirk, and these are sufficient to prevent her from pursuing any form of labour systematically, as well as from attempting any kind of higher work. The making of cardboard and match-boxes is one of the worst paid trades in this country; because it is one that can easily be learned, does not require great cleanliness of person or surroundings, and her children can assist the worker in her labour from an early age. Consequently if we were to organize all the match-box makers of the East End tomorrow, it would avail nothing. A new troop of workers would rapidly spring up to take the place of the old, since the work is simple, and there are always women wanting an employment to save them from the stern discipline of the poor-house. Even should all the poor women of these countries

join this union, the result would only be that the entire trade of match-box making would fall into the hands of foreigners. A part of the trade has already indeed left the country, and it is greatly to be feared that the present agitation will sweep away the remainder. The British match-box maker will receive for her labour a small fraction beyond the remuneration that would suffice to support life in the cheapest towns and villages of the European Continent. If she accept this, she will in all probability be chosen rather than a foreigner to do the work; but if she refuse it, then there is little doubt that the trade will take flight, and leave the unhappy creatures at present earning some kind of livelihood by it in a still worse plight than they are. Once let it become the settled industry of such a community as is to be found in many a Swedish hamlet or German forest-village, and it is gone from our people for ever. The foreigner, working under healthier conditions, inured to poverty and of thrifty habits, will acquire such dexterity as to leave the London rival far behind, and make it easy for the trader to gain his profit without being held up to execration by the majority of his countrymen.

This holds good too of a higher order of labour. The "finishers" of mantles and jackets form another class of ill-paid workers. But they are working under much the same conditions as the match-box makers. Many of them are only eking out a subsistence and could take no regular daily employment, or they have not been trained to do good work. A woman, when her family becomes too numerous for her husband to support, or the latter falls ill, loses work, or takes to drinking, is forced to make some shift to keep a roof over her head. Machine-work readily suggests itself in such circumstances. The machine is probably bought on the hire-system and a little instruction soon makes the purchaser able to use it. She applies for work and, if she is fortunate enough to receive it, devotes all

the time to it she can spare from attending to her husband and children, cleaning, washing and cooking. But work done under these conditions is not likely to be first-rate work. Few people would care to give good material to a person in this position, with whom it is liable to be crushed, soiled, or otherwise injured in the small and crowded home in which a married woman of the working classes is almost certain to live. Knowing this, the employer is sure to entrust such a person with only the cheapest class of work, and it is, in fact, only such work that is done by these women.¹

And here may be noted one or two points in which woman's work differs from man's, and places her at a disadvantage, when any form of combination is attempted.

The laws of Trades Unions are framed in the interests of the mediocre worker, and the best as well as the worst workman must consequently suffer from them. A really clever and conscientious man is deprived by them of the power of showing his superiority, and of obtaining the reward which is due to his talents and character. The inferior worker, on the other hand, is often a still greater sufferer. He is readily seen to be worth less than his fellows, yet he may not accept the small wage which is the just reward of his inferior labour, and he is therefore driven out of regular employment down into a lower class, where his intrusion helps to make life a little harder for the poor unskilled labourer earning a haphazard livelihood by picking up any chance work that may fall in his way. But the nature of women will never submit to such treatment as this. Women are far too strongly individual to allow themselves to be boiled down in the common female-labour caldron

to a kind of feminine hodge-podge. The best workwoman is generally she who has few social ties and few pleasures in life. The joys of the public-house, the race-course, and the gambling-table are denied to the decent working girl, and she is forced to find an outlet for her affections in the products of her labour. Her work becomes dear to her, a part of herself, and she could no more bear the thought of having it rated with work which she considers inferior, than a mother could bear to have her children classed with the children of other people whom she despises.

And even if this were not true, women's work is subjected to another disadvantage, which scarcely affects many of the trades engaged in by men. Trades Unions succeed in keeping up the price of labour in certain trades because the workmen as yet are practically limited to persons residing in these countries. Masons, carpenters, plumbers, plasterers, painters, &c., are all obliged to live at least for a time in the country in which they work. Now, these trades are not acquired readily, or without considerable training and experience. But it is only the comparatively well-to-do parents in England who have their sons taught a trade. Consequently, if a strike take place in any of these trades, the employers are in a great measure at the mercy of the employed, for their places cannot readily be filled up. Good artisans, when unable to find employment at home, emigrate or adopt some other calling, so that there is never a large standing army of qualified workmen ready to supply the defection of a large body of actual workers. Hitherto it has been counted unadvisable to import artisans in large numbers from abroad; even if their work were superior, their ignorance of the language and of the peculiarities of the English branch of their trade must lessen the value of their services. The gradual introduction of foreigners would be of no assistance to employers. Being obliged

¹ It is not meant here to assert that only married women, or women with families, or those whose time cannot be wholly given to their work, are employed in poorly paid trades; but that such women, being always glad to take any work requiring no great nicety and that can be done at home, must handicap the others.

to reside in this country, the foreigner would soon acquire the ways of his English fellow-workers and would certainly throw in his lot with them in any struggle between Capital and Labour. The German is generally very humble in his demands when he comes as a stranger to this country seeking work; but once he has got a footing, there is no Briton who sets a higher value on his services.

On the other hand, in the worst paid trades in which women are employed their presence in a certain district or country is not essential. This causes foreign competition to bear with peculiar hardness on them. If they work less well than women abroad, or demand a much higher price for their work, it is sure to fall into the hands of foreigners. This is in effect what has happened. The needlewomen at the East End are not highly skilled workers; those at the West End ask too high prices to give the trader enough profit for his risk and labour; and therefore the best part of the trade has left the country.

A lady, looking over the stock in a wholesale mantle warehouse lately, remarked to the young man who was showing the goods to her that they seemed chiefly to be of German manufacture. "Oh, yes," he replied, "we get all our best work from Germany; we could get nothing like this done here." It is not to be supposed that the women of these countries cannot do what their Teutonic sisters can, but that the price asked for good work here is such as practically to put it in the hands of the latter. All this may appear very cruel and unfair in the eyes of many amiable persons, and may lead them to say hard things of traders and employers of labour. But these well-meaning people must bear in mind that even for traders existence is a terrible struggle. The competition amongst the trading classes is rapidly reducing the profit of each individual to the lowest point at which it would be worth while to invest capital. No doubt, there are many traders at the

present time making a large profit out of badly paid labour, but no interference on the part of the public would remedy this condition of things. Were it possible arbitrarily to raise the price of labour and diminish the trader's profit, the result would be far from desirable. The small capitalists and retail dealers would be unable to support themselves on the merely fractional profit that would suffice to keep large traders afloat. The former would inevitably be driven out of the ranks of capitalists and would pass down into a lower social stratum there to swell the numbers of the already too numerous working classes. The larger traders, being able to endure until the pressure of competition should be somewhat slackened, would be the real gainers; eventually they would secure their old profits by a return to high prices, and this would of course react unfavourably upon the labour market, by lessening the demand for the goods furnished by labour. Meantime we should be back to past conditions, to a time when high prices must be paid by the nation at large for articles in the production of which it has probably received but a very small portion of the wages spent. This state of matters would bear with peculiar hardness upon the poor. The work done by the lowest class of workers does not benefit people in comfortable so much as it does those in narrow circumstances. The ulsters and other mantles sewn by the East End women for such meagre remuneration are not worn by women who can afford to pay much for clothes, but by women only a little better off in worldly circumstances than the workers themselves. What, then, would be the condition of the working classes, and the poor generally in this country, if clothing and other necessities of civilized life were expensive, while the demand for their labour was gradually diminishing? A cry for Protection would of course be raised and the protection of manufacturers must be followed by the protection of other

interests, notably those of the farmer and cattle-raiser. But would the country be prepared to return to Protection? And if it were, what would it gain in the long run by it? This is not the place to argue the merits of the case of Free Trade *versus* Protection; the country has decided in favour of the former, and there seems little likelihood of its reversing its judgment.

What then, it may be asked, is to be done? Are we to leave these wretched victims of our modern civilization to be bled at pleasure by their luckier fellows? Are we to suffer people who happen to be born in poverty to be treated as worse than criminals, and driven down to the lowest point at which existence can be maintained? It would require a stout heart indeed in these days, as well as a cold one, to answer such a question in the affirmative. Let us hope this will never be required of us. Something may no doubt be done towards the amelioration of the lot of these poor sisters; but any great or radical change in their condition is scarcely to be expected, so long as women are plentiful and their labour of no great value. That the establishment of Trades Unions among the poorer female workers would fail to accomplish the desired end, nay, that Trades Unionism itself will never succeed among women, it has been the endeavour of this article to show. At the risk of being tedious, however, it may be well to recapitulate the reasons for such statements. Briefly then, Trades Unionism amongst the poorest classes of working women will never succeed, because (1) the trade of most women is only a part of their business, not always the most important part; consequently a class-feeling can scarcely exist as it would in the case of men. (2) Many of these workers are only eking out a living, and the low wage paid for their work does not bear very hardly upon them. (3) Others are only obliged to work at intervals, when some special necessity forces them to

unusual exertion; they may therefore leave the ranks of these workers any day, and are not likely to make sacrifices for a class to which they only occasionally belong. (4) Work done at home may be taken by persons belonging to very different classes in society, and women who are glad to increase their little incomes, even by the addition of a few pence, would scorn the idea of identifying themselves with the great mass of their fellow-workers. (5) In many cases it could never be ascertained at what rate women were paid for their work. (6) If all other difficulties were overcome, and women succeeded in forcing up the price of this kind of work by combination, the higher prices could not long be maintained, for they would only succeed in attracting a larger number of workers into the field, or in driving the work out of the country.

We might as well shut our eyes to the law of gravitation and reckon upon an apple remaining unsupported in the air, provided its doing so would benefit many persons known to us, as deny by word or action that competition must influence the labour-market, and that when women are superabundant their work is necessarily cheap. What may be done towards helping these unfortunate persons we cannot now stop to enquire. The object of the present writer is merely to lift a voice of warning against raising hopes that can never be fulfilled, and forcing organizations into existence calculated to have a most injurious effect, not upon one class alone, but upon the country at large. Let benevolent people remember that Nature is not a philanthropist after the modern idea of philanthropy. The great laws by which the Author of all things has caused our world to be governed have been framed for the welfare of mankind, not for any one order or body; and all attempts to interfere with their really beneficent operation must inevitably end in disaster.

E. P. WYLDE.

THE VALLEY OF THE TEME.

I NEVER walk by the side of the Worcestershire Teme, in that rich country lying between the rugged Malvern Hills,—most ancient of British rocks—and the Severn Valley, without recalling that brilliant summary of the condition of England with which Macaulay commences his History. A belt of uncultivated forest still stretched across the midlands in the sixteenth century; the hart came down to the water-brook, and boars haunted the thickets. Peregrine falcons, buzzards, and kites preyed on the unprotected; the meres and reed-covered marshes were inhabited by the bittern and endless wildfowl, and the more desolate districts were unsafe for solitary travellers by reason of the numerous bands of outlaws.

In two hundred years all the wild tracts have yielded to cultivation. The picture to-day is of a widely different nature. Hop-gardens fringe the Teme-side, and the valleys are simply vast orchards extending for miles through the heart of the western county. If fruit-growers can succeed anywhere they should be prosperous in these parts.

The fitful Teme is, in several respects, a peculiar river. It has carved an erratic course through the ribs of the hills, and the present channel lies deep between the banks of red marl from the Radnor forests, through the borders of Herefordshire and Shropshire, joining the silver Severn a few miles below the "faithful city" of Worcester. It passes through some of the most pleasant sylvan and pastoral scenery of which England can boast, although it is a country not very generally known. In the lower parts the stream is irregular, deep swirling pools alternating with shallow reaches and a gravelly bed, well loved by the spawning salmon. In the drought of 1887 the stream

almost shrank to nothing, and the fish congregated for dear life in the isolated pools. At other times floods accumulate in an incredibly short space of time, and the valley represents a broad watercourse, sometimes the third of a mile wide, with a tearing current which sweeps away cottages, orchards, and hedgerows. On one occasion a pike swam in at an open window on the first floor of a flooded house; trees were standing upside down, and cattle swam to islets for temporary safety. In the general confusion it might well have been as in the classic days,

When fish were in the elm-tops caught,
Where once the stock-dove went to bide,
And does were floating, all distraught,
Adown the tide.

And then the river once more returns to its usual bed as suddenly as the floods have arisen.

The flat meadows, *Hams*, hames or homes, near the mouth of the Teme help to explain the early Saxon settlements and germs of village life in England. My attention was drawn to the fact that several of these Hams afforded common rights in alternate years; that is, the villagers can graze cattle in one piece or another every year, but not on the same ground for two successive years. Some of the arable lands are also available to the village householders under peculiar strictures and reservations. For example, so long as the corn remains on the ground, the enclosure is private and each one farms his own allotment. If, however, one occupier happens to lead his corn before the rest, private rights immediately lapse for the year, and cattle can be turned in,—corn or no corn. Therefore each one leaves a shock or two until his neighbours

are ready to lead, and by common consent the cattle are afterwards turned into the stubbles until it is necessary to plough and sow again.

In these Hams we have an interesting relic of Saxon life, when the roving inhabitants gradually settled down, cleared the forest glades, fenced certain lands, and cultivated the soil. There was little notion of private property, but all who resided within the industrial area participated in the produce of the soil. They erected dwellings, accumulated cattle, and enjoyed full rights of the chase in the surrounding woodlands. The very foundation of the village society has its origin in these incipient communities, as the Hams and curious local rights clearly show, and as Mr. Green has explained in his attractive style (*History of the British People*, I. i.).

Above Powick Hams the valley rapidly contracts. The course of the Teme lies between deep banks, at Knightwick and Clifton the woods literally overhanging the stream, and the winding river is lost in solitude amid the most delightful scenery. The rare birds find a congenial home, and a few indigenous animals still linger in secluded lair; only by wading the stream can their hidden fastnesses be reached amid their perfect surroundings.

Among the river-side birds few possess more marked characters than the amphibious dipper, or water-ouzel. The European representative of the *pitta*, or ant-thrushes, which Mr. Wallace found so abundant in the islands of the Archipelago, it is like no other British bird, and forms an attractive study in every phase of its existence. Equally at home while skimming the surface of the stream in rapid flight or diving below with the greatest facility, the dipper is not web-footed like water-fowl; it dwells in some secluded native haunt, far from the interruptions of mankind who discover solely to destroy. The most favourable opportunity for the close observation of these vivacious birds is in the pleasant solitude of a fishing

ramble, when, undisturbed by conversation or the clumsy movements of kindred bipeds, you can stand in silence beneath some drooping alder to note endless phases in the animate world. The dipper, perhaps, rests for a moment on a fragment of projecting rock before taking alarm at the approach of a stranger. There is time to note the compact shape of the bird, the inverted arch of the back and short rounded tail; the upper parts are dark rusty brown, the breast is satin white, and the belly dull red. The flight is direct and swift, somewhat suggestive of the kingfisher; in some parts, indeed, you cannot persuade the country folk that the sombre bird is not the female of the more brilliant river-species. When startled the water-ouzel dives with consummate facility, but its movements cannot easily be followed beneath the surface. It was once my good fortune to watch a pair cross a mountain burn, literally running at the bottom from one side of the stream to the other. I could see them perfectly and note every action in the clear shallow water. They moved their legs freely, and had both wings spread, beating the water in order to keep the buoyant body down, but really running meanwhile.

The nest of the water-ouzel is perhaps the finest specimen of British bird architecture. It is constructed of green mosses and fragments exactly matching the surrounding herbage, and is therefore easily overlooked. Sometimes the domed structure is of considerable size and woven closely into a texture of great strength. It is placed amid rushes at the roots of some overhanging tree or in a hole in the shelving river-bank; the eggs are white and elongated in shape. A war of extermination has been waged against the water-ouzels in some localities through an idea that they are destructive to fisheries from their habit of feeding on ova and young fish. But there is a considerable difference of opinion on this point, and on the whole the balance of evidence

tends to prove that insects and small shell-fish are the main food of the bird, and that small fish (not *ova*) are sometimes eaten, but not in quantities sufficient to injure the angler's sport.

In the middle of summer,—if the weather be in harmony with the reputed season—there are odd times when it is a pleasure to rove at night by the river-side. We hear of the silence of night, but the animal world is not asleep when darkness falls on the land; on the contrary, a grand carnival is then held. There is a forcible contrast between darkness and sound which is more startling than the busy turmoil of the daytime; every movement is intensified, and the distorted shadows assume imaginary shapes. The splash of a salmon disporting in the water breaks the apparent stillness; it might be a walrus to judge by the noise. The hissing cry of a goat-sucker or night-jar reverberates from an adjacent thicket; and occasionally I hear the plaintive piping of the quail in the distance. A few migrant birds annually pass through the country, usually in June; they fly only at night, resting in seclusion during the day to escape the attack of birds of prey ever on the look-out for fresh quarry. An owl flits by noiselessly and suddenly gives forth a terrific screech as if to wake the dead. They search the hedgerows and scour the fields for mice and stray rodents; no other bird is such a satisfactory vermin-killer. Owls should be jealously preserved instead of being wantonly destroyed. Hedgehogs also are most lively in the night-season, scuttling along with unexpected speed after beetles and other esteemed articles of diet. Otters whistle to each other as they hunt in pairs by the river-side, fishing the chosen reaches of the stream with systematic skill. It is notorious that they feed on the flaky morsels of flesh from the shoulders of trout or salmon; yet, I believe, they will take eels from choice. A colony of badgers has existed in these parts from time immemorial; and at night, together with stoats and wea-

sels, they come forth to forage around. And besides the otter, the badger, the night-jar, and the quail I hear many cries and notes which are difficult to identify with their respective owners. Many birds like the reed-warbler and redstart sing far into a summer's night; while the song of the nightingale itself is hard to distinguish from the full melody of thrushes and black-birds commencing a matutinal song long before the earliest sunrise. The heron is roving at night, pursuing its avocation as a consummate poacher. Swifts fly during the darkness and squeaking bats hover in the air; unwieldy cockchafers buzz in your face and countless moths flit to and fro.

In the flat river-side meadows,—which a couple of months later will be gay with the crocus-like autumn *colchicum*—I have watched the moles diligently at work; but it is necessary to stand perfectly still for they hear or feel the lightest footfall. There is a brook just here running into the Teme between banks fully six feet deep under which moles have been proved to burrow. Yet there is no reason for such extraordinary labour, unless it be antipathy to the light of day. In this same part I have the record of several moles swimming the stream. In water you can best observe the little sharp black eyes, usually hidden beneath the soft fur. I should like to show one of these "degenerate animals" to Professor Drummond; immersed in a bucket of water there can be no doubt as to their vision; Cuvier knew they could see well enough, and so did Frank Buckland.

The most remarkable creatures in Teme are the river lamperns, a near relative of the great sea-lamprey, mottled yellow and olive, which also ascends the river in the spawning season. The smaller species is uniform olive-brown in colour with lighter shades underneath. It swarms up the Severn estuary in February by thousands, and visits the sea again in the autumn. Sometimes numbers can be seen collected in pools beneath the

river bank, waiting for freshets in order to resume their march. The migrations are always made at night, and at certain weirs and mills special *potchers*, or eel-traps, are placed for the lampern which is esteemed as a great delicacy. At such seasons I have placed my hand in the water to draw it forth presently with a lampern attached; for the circular mouth adheres to anything solid through a peculiar power of suction. All readers may not be familiar with the structure of these lowly fishes. The body is eel-like in form and has a similar lack of scales. The length averages fourteen inches; there is a continuous dorsal fin, and the fish might readily be mistaken for an eel. The eyes are set far back, and there is one small hole in the top of the head connected with the characteristic breathing apparatus. The round snout is of strong cartilage, while the teeth are soft and a long tongue lies far back in the throat. Seven circular holes are visible on either side of the head, in straight rows like the holes of a flute; and these orifices form the generic distinction. They correspond with inner cells, divided by *septa* but communicating with each other. By these modified gills the water-circulation is complete, and the cavities create the strange power of suction. If I stop up all the holes the lampern quickly falls back from my hand into the water, being no longer able to adhere by the mouth. There are some points of obscurity in the history of the lamperns. It is of biological value from the fact that it belongs to the only *genus* of British fishes which undergoes a definite metamorphosis. There is a transition from the *elver* stage to that of the fully developed lampern; the shape of the mouth alters, and a second dorsal fin entirely disappears or becomes merged in a single ribbon-shaped fin. After the lamperns have ascended from the sea and duly deposited their *ova* in holes scraped in the muddy bed of the stream, the young fish may be seen in due time on the sides of the weirs and

wriggling among the weeds; but later on they all seem to disappear until the full grown ones migrate once more seawards in the autumn. I have been unable to trace the intermediate stages, unless, indeed, a different-looking fish is really an immature lampern.

In May or June the local fishermen use a bait which is called by them "the Vampern": it resembles a river lampern, but the mouth is triangular, and, although the holes are on each side of the head, there is no power of suction; the total length never exceeds six inches. It is dug up from the sand shoals by the river, and answers to the description of the sand-lamprey or sand-pride mentioned in various works on Natural History. I never feel quite certain that this fish is not the transitional stage of the lampern. In this case it would, I think, be proved that the lampern-fry bury themselves in sand or mud during the transitional period of life, reappearing as full-grown fish in the fall of the year.

The suction-power is of great service to the lampreys in the spawning-season. Two fish will select a suitable spot; then ascending the stream for a yard or two they fasten themselves to a stone, drifting down with the suspended weight to the required place. The stone is dropped, and subsequently worked round and round until a hole is made in the mud sufficiently large to contain the *ova*. It is said lamperns attach themselves to other fishes, eating into the flesh and thus killing their victim; but this is open to some doubt. The nature of their food I do not know, but in captivity a specimen lived for several weeks on nothing beyond the particles contained in the water.

It is only salmon and eel-like fishes that now ascend the Teme from the sea by the Severn estuary; for, owing to some alterations at Tewkesbury weir, the tidal influence is not much felt up to Worcester. Some few years ago shoals of shad annually ascended the Teme as far as the first mill at Powick. Flounders also used to come

up the river, and an isolated colony still exists beneath a certain bridge, apparently cut off from retreat but still existing at the muddy bottom, strange survivals in their novel environments.

The nuthatch is commonly distributed in some parts of the valley. I happen to have a partiality for nuts, and so has this little creeping bird with salmon breast and slate-coloured back. In the latter part of the year my attention was attracted to an oak tree. Firmly wedged between the interstices of the bark at irregular intervals were more than a dozen split and empty hazel-nut shells; they had evidently been so placed to facilitate the breaking of the hard nut and subsequent extraction of the desired kernel. There was one nut absolutely unbroken; I had interrupted the operation. No bird or animal was visible to me, though doubtless I was watched from some safe eminence by eyes a hundred times keener than my own. I was inclined to think a squirrel had been disturbed at his mid-day meal, but at the time nothing could be detected to explain the matter. Another day, returning to the same spot, I saw a nuthatch at work; it was head downwards, busily cracking a nut. The little short fat body with stunted tail is graceful and facile enough on a tree-trunk; on the ground it is an ungainly bird waddling with awkward gait. The whole valley is a favourite locality for bird-study. Siskins arrive in the autumn, butcher-birds in the summer, with scarce warblers and many of our less common visitors. Bramblings come in the winter; three species of wood-peckers find a constant home, and the wryneck regularly puts in an appearance in the spring. The great crested

grebe, with chestnut fringe round the head, has been captured among the water-birds, with Temminck's stint and others. Kingfishers of course abound by the Teme; the young ones may be seen by those who know the favoured haunts, disporting by the water-side. Quite recently I saw the curious giant kingfisher of New South Wales and Victoria—more commonly known as the laughing jackass, in its native bush. It is strange to note the diversity in the habits of the nearly related birds in Europe and in Australia. Our bird feeds on fish and lives by the water; in Australia water-courses are few and intermittent in character; there are long seasons of drought when all moisture vanishes. The *dacelo*, or laughing jackass, has consequently to live according to its surroundings; reptiles and similar food take the place of fish, and the bird can live where no water is. To emphasize this fact I may add that two specimens now living in my possession and thriving well in England, have never tasted water since they arrived six months ago. If water is offered they at once knock the vessel over as if in a violent passion. They eat raw meat, mice, sparrows, or such trifles, and live almost in the open air except in severe weather. The contrast between the two species of kingfisher has a special interest, illustrating forcibly the laws of adaptation of species to changed conditions. One bird seeks water and fishes because both are always available; the Australian relation chooses snakes and dislikes water because rivers and fish are few and far between. The species which cannot conform must surely die in the incessant struggle for existence.

C. PARKINSON.

ON THE CHARACTER OF NERO.

IN the whole history of Rome, whose exordium was two thousand six hundred and forty years ago and whose conclusion seems as far off now as it seemed to the prophetic hopes of Romulus, the period of the twelve Cæsars fascinates with something of a cynical attraction. The delicate, high-minded Virgil had chaunted with zealous faith the Roman Empire; a calm and mighty sway over the nations, correlative to the motion of the stars in heaven and the life of gods. Augustus Cæsar reigns, a present god; himself a man of marble, stately and repellent. Never before had morality so embellished her dominion. Exuberance and bad taste in conduct and in manners were to disappear, as a decent culture led up the Golden Age; moderation, temperance,—all the old classical catchwords were to witch the passionate world, civic and barbarian, eastern and western, into dignity and repose. But Augustus is caught up, the man of the marble mask, to the nectar and the sacred couches; so at least courtly Horace phrases in anticipation the event of his death. And lo! vanish Virgil and the Golden Age of rusticity tempered with light; from cultured idealities we turn to the things which have found their historian in Tacitus.

De Quincey only, and De Quincey hardly, has discovered how in these emperors the immensity, the wildness of the joke that their position was, mastered and dominated their intellects, stimulated their passions with suggestion, and ran riot through their homely conceptions. "Have I played well my part in life's comedy?" said Augustus, as the curtain fell. Yes, and now call on the satyric drama. If it was a comedy to Augustus, the succeeding years were a history of the development of the joke. Caligula

one day burst out laughing. "What amuses you?" said the Consuls. "Why!" replied the Emperor, "I was laughing at the thought that, if I chose, I could behead you both to-morrow." But perhaps the subjects of Nero would have bitterly envied the facility with which Caligula was amused.

Tiberius, though not a wag, appreciated the jest of empire, but in him it aroused a saturnine sneer. Twice he ordered his attendants and made ready his procession for Rome; twice the obedient Fathers mustered to welcome him. He sailed up the Tiber, looked at his capital, and sailed back to solitude and Capri. A funeral was proceeding, and a bystander, addressing the corpse, said, "Tell Augustus that the legacy he bequeathed to the people has not yet been paid!" Tiberius overheard it, sent for the man, paid him his share in full, and then despatched him to take the receipt to Augustus.

But the strain of empire told upon the boyishness of Caligula; and for Tiberius, too, it was a burden as well as a jest. Of his administration Tiberius is reported to have said, "They may hate so long as they approve," "They may hate, so long as they fear," it had become in Caligula's mouth. But Nero, who cared nought for hatred or approval, was the people's darling. Playing his part with a rare appreciation of effect, he works up to the culminating years by degrees and gradual hints. The piece opens with that masterly device, the five Neronian years. He harangues the people in the Campus, with personal panegyrics on the wisdom and sagacity of his eminently foolish predecessor Claudius. From the Campus he goes to the Senate, to assure the Fathers of his respect for the constitution; and when they pour

out their thanks, he deprecates gratitude, "until I deserve it." At home Burrus, an old soldier, with the irreproachable morals of old soldiers, and Seneca, the rich stoic, guide his youthful steps; while his affection for his mother Agrippina is almost childish. Meanwhile the empire is admirably administered, wise provisions made, constitutional law observed. "Ah! that I had not learned to write," is Nero's ingenuous cry, when required to sign death-warrants.

But little by little the dramatic interest develops. Britannicus, his brother by adoption, a boy of fourteen, is in the way; he is poisoned, thanks to Locusta's art, at a dinner given by Nero. Suetonius records the popular belief, that the motive to the crime was no less a professional jealousy of his voice than a politic fear of his ambition. The first dose only made the boy very sick; whereupon Nero sent for Locusta and chastised her with his own hand. She excused herself; a stronger dose would have been a quicker method certainly, but a more public. "As if," replied Nero, "the Julian law had terrors for me," and compelled her there and then to concoct the strongest and most effectual mixture she knew. This was offered to a goat; the goat lived five hours, to their great disappointment. But when a draught was produced by their joint efforts which proved the instant destruction of a pig, then an invitation was sent to Britannicus. He fell dead at the first mouthful. "That epilepsy has carried him off at last," said Nero; and no one contradicted him.

These were strange doings for a model young Emperor; but of course Seneca, the stoic, knew of them; there was no cause for alarm. His young pupil does not poison only; he dances, he sings (and that execrably), he produces elaborate euphuistic verse, he drives chariots. Strange and new as it was, what did it matter to the populace? No more than the murders of Agrippina and Octavia, mother and half-sister, since they coincided with

schemes for remitting the public taxes. There is no sudden frenzy to account for the growth of crime within Nero; all is orderly, progressive, a conscious rake's progress, from the good young Emperor to the crowned victor of Olympia among his *claqueurs*. It may seem strangely perverse that Nero should have been loved, lamented, adored. He killed his mother, he killed men by companies; he even, writes Juvenal, composed an epic poem,—yet he was not loathed, nor an object of repulsion. Great criminals are mainly admired as great, aspiring, possessed. Nero, who was none of these, was not admired but loved. "Even now," says Dion Chrysostom, writing in the time of Trajan, "Even now the people long for him to be alive." And women, who could not have given themselves up to the vulgar brutalities of Tiberius, clung with real love to Nero. Poppaea, whom Josephus calls a devotee, a refined nature, with a delicate inclination towards Jewish piety; Acte, whom some have thought a Christian, Nero's first love, and loving him past death; the two nurses who prepared his body for burial; the unknown hands that for years threw flowers on his tomb; all these loved him with varying but with evident love.

The boyish mischievousness of Nero, which moves among its own horrors uncontaminated, was perhaps the trait of his character which made him more lovable than his serious or stupid predecessors. He toyed with horrors like a child unconscious of its cruelty. He looks long upon the naked body of his murdered mother and remarks, "I never knew she was so beautiful." Dion Cassius tells that he chalked the face of dead Britannicus, discoloured with the poison,—a mere freak, not a forced compliment to the Julian law.

The remark of Tiberius, when one of his condemned wretches committed suicide in gaol, "Carnulius has escaped me," made his friends shudder. But Nero lightly told the sorrowing relatives of Plautus whom he killed,

that it was only on inspecting the corpse that he had discovered that Plautus had so large a nose; had it been pointed out to him before, he would certainly have spared his life. Life with such a nose would have been ample penance for any crime. One of the charges against Thræsea, miserably done to death, was that he had never heard Nero play the cithara. In his youth Nero was attached to his great-aunt, and went to see her when she was ill in bed. She fondly stroked his face, and teased him about the growth of his beard,—“When that wants a barber I shall have lived long enough.” Nero at once turned and had himself shaved; then he gave orders to the physicians that his aunt’s purgative should be somewhat stronger that day. They obeyed him, and his aunt’s omen fulfilled itself. His stepson played at being emperor among his companions. Nero lay in wait for the child and drowned him.

So it is with all the incidents of the Neronian reign. Something grotesque mingles with the abominations. Christian maidens are brought into the staring circus, to be stripped and grouped as Niobes, Dirces, and Danaïdes, in order to gratify the warped æstheticism of the Emperor, whom the combination of courage, chastity, and beauty, put to the respective tests of torture, publicity, and criticism, struck as a felicitous experiment. The burning of Rome, that he might witness in spirit by a sympathetic imagination the burning of Troy, the employment of Christians as garden-torches, alike equally point to the leading idea of Nero. If there were monstrous murders in old times, if rulers of antiquity were experts in debauchery, their record must be outdone now. He outstripped his predecessors in all the stage-tradition which Augustus handed down. We have noticed his treatment of the Christians; we may compare it with the action of Claudius who “expelled from Rome the Jews, led on by the turbulent Christ,” or with Tiberius, whose invention went no

further than a plan of employing Christians in all the deadly climates.

Caligula had said he would make his horse consul; but Nero kept a stable of retired circus horses, which he clothed in the Roman toga and pensioned with actual coin from the public treasury. It was Caligula who moralized after drinking a pearl that one should be either frugal or Cæsar. Nero covered Rome with his golden palace, and said at last he was lodged like a human being.

Caligula approaches the true Neronian spirit when he compels senators in their official garb to run for miles on foot behind his carriage; or dresses them as slaves, and makes them attend his table with their tunics tucked up. But Nero thought a senator’s proper place was in the circus. He gave a gladiatorial fight of senators against knights. One Icarus did his best at that entertainment to fly for Nero’s amusement, but met with no greater success than his prototype; at his first attempt he fell close to Nero’s couch, and bespattered him with his blood. Ordinarily Nero would not speak to senators when he met them in the street; and they could perhaps bear that better than the remark which he dropped casually in Greece to the effect that, when he returned to Rome, he meant to have the whole senate to dinner and let Locusta arrange the bill of fare. When Vindex was rising in Gaul, the Senate anxiously awaited Nero’s commands. For eight days he said nothing whatever; then wrote word that he was hoarse just now, but when he felt better he would come and sing to them again.

He did not treat his officers with greater concern than the Senate. He was present one day at a street-brawl and was greatly amused by it; then by way of taking part in it himself, he took up a large tile, and throwing it at the prætor, broke his head. It was to incidents like these, possibly, that he owed his popularity. His conception of the office and function of a

tribune grew up in the following manner. He was in the habit of going out at night in disguise for marauding and brawling purposes. One evening he attacked a high-born lady, and her husband, Julius Montanus, not knowing that he was then being honoured by a royal visit, met force with force and had the better of the encounter. The next day Nero's face was very much bruised, and he kept within doors for a week or so; but he bore no ill-will to Julius Montanus, until the man was so ill-advised as to present himself with an apology. Nero then dealt with him as his offence demanded; and to guard against such incidents in future, he gave orders that on his midnight expeditions the tribunes should always accompany him at a respectful but reassuring distance.

To the Vestal Virgins,—that we may complete the Neronian theory of the constitution—he offered with delicate attention tickets for the games. His appearance on the public platforms or the ring was in many parts, but always resulted in his winning the prize, even on one occasion when he was overturned in the first lap and unable to finish the race. As a singer he appeared in the following characters: *Œdipus blind*, *Hercules mad*, *Orestes killing his mother*, and *Canace bringing forth a child*. It was a dangerous thing to leave the theatre when Nero was performing, and the ordinary device of the more impatient among the audience was to feign death, and so go out with funeral pomp on the shoulders of four others anxious for release. He had also some of the weaknesses of the musical profession, if Suetonius is right in attributing the death of Burrus, who sang second in the duets, to a gargle which Nero sent him for his throat.

He was indeed an artist throughout, and an artist to the last. There is an insurrection in Gaul. Nero will go to meet the army, himself unarmed, and will weep before them. Galba is marching upon Italy; Nero convokes

a council. He will make a reconciliation, high festival shall be held, and songs of triumph sung; "Which," said he, "I must go at once and write," that being apparently, the part of the Emperor. He is in the hut of his faithful freedman Phaon; the centurion of cavalry bursts in upon him as the dagger of a slave is through his throat. "Where is your loyalty?" gasps the dying Emperor, himself so notable a paragon of stable and ancestral virtues.

Many of this world's actors become raw and amateurish in their exits. But Nero does not miss his cue. "Here dies an artist," he remarks, with an aptness and a humour that is only too rare on death-beds. He was artist, indeed; but the pity and the grotesqueness lie in the perpetual achievement of the grandiose, the barbaric, the monstrous, when he aimed at merely the beautiful and the colossal. De Quincey, whose account of the Cæsars reads like a second essay upon murder as a fine art—De Quincey rests his hope of an acquittal for Nero upon the essential fragrance of his times, acting upon a temperament touched with insanity. "So," he writes, "this prince, who has so long and with so little investigation of his case passed for a monster or demoniac counterfeit of man, would at length be brought back within the fold of humanity, as an object rather of pity than of abhorrence; and when thus reconciled to our human charities, would first of all be made intelligible to our understandings." Theophile Gautier apostrophizes: "*Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, mighty Imperial Romans! O you whom the world so little comprehends, at whose heels the rabble-rout of rhetoricians is ever barking! I am your fellow-sufferer, and all the pity that is left in me is compassionate towards you!*"

It is evident that neither these, nor the other writers who have had their say on Nero, regard him as anything but an extravagance of Nature, requiring special pleading or explanation. There is a book, a romance of psycho-

logy, which suggests on the problem of human nature thoughts half terrible and half welcome. In his *Marble Faun* Hawthorne conceives a human nature so far inhuman as to be essentially innocent; innocent, that is, not by the accidents of purposed ignorance and seclusion, but by virtue of natural affinities with the conscienceless creatures of the pagan woodland; he is Donatello, the Roman Faun of the present century. The most notable feature of the conception is the purity and whole-heartedness of the original nature; but it is at once remarkable that though a charming isolated individual, Donatello is not a satisfactory type. Fiction has not given us the perfect type of man without morals. In Mr. Stevenson's Mr. Hyde, and in Hawthorne's Donatello there is a lack of intelligence and humanity that are within the reach of bad and good without distinction. They do not live for us as they should; Donatello remains always the Marble Faun, though he moves and has his being; Mr. Hyde is never more than a chemical result.

But in Nero the conditions are satisfied. He lived out his life of flesh and blood, without the knowledge of good as a possible thing having entered his mind nor troubled his innate conception of pure unconscious evil. He did not say, with the great defiance of Satan, "Evil, be thou my good!" Evil was his nature easily, and without other remorse than physical. Nero, Emperor of Rome, the beast, since M. Renan will have it so, of the Apocalypse, the great master of death and lust, has sustenance and vitality. It

is impossible to light upon anything in the historians who treat of Nero which suggests the working in him of conscience, acceptance of philosophy as a self-justification, moral regret, or moral hesitation. No one can find a plausible place for him in any scheme of salvation. Charles Lamb, in his beautiful childhood, was content to "gaze on the frowning beauty of Nero with wonder;" but if it were our business to measure out the exact degree of horror which his career demands, it would be vain to attempt by any analysis to soften away the picture which we have in the pages of Tacitus, Dion Cassius, and Suetonius. To the mind of Nero's parents, at any rate, these stern veracities were in a way present; to Agrippina, and to the honest Domitius Ahenobarbus, who exultingly replied to his congratulating friends that from such a father and mother nothing could be born but a deadly curse to the State of Rome.

As they forecast it, so those to whom judgment belongs must judge the life of a man whose memory is a loathing to all other sinners, from Jerome to Dean Merivale, because it has no cloak of moral pretence; to whom moral dread was as unknown as physical courage; who had not enough interest in holiness to become its antagonist, but lived with evil in primitive unconsciousness, naked and not ashamed; simply and in a sanctioned phrase, the mystery of ungodliness, but a mystery from which the heart may be plucked with a little fellow-feeling.

JANUS.

LEAVES FROM A NOTE-BOOK.

OF A TAX.

THE wisest man, said an old philosopher, is sometimes foolish, and even Sir William Harcourt has his moments of reason. In such a moment he gave utterance to a sentiment on Mr. Goschen's Budget which should endear him to the hearts of all strugglers, old and young. Perhaps he did not intend his words to be taken quite in the sense they wore to at least one reader. Perhaps the day will come again (may the fates long keep it back!) when he will be in a position to forget those words, to ignore them, to stultify them, to perform one of those amazing *quarts de conversion* (as the old strategists had it) which distinguish the philanthropist in office from the philanthropist out of office. "The Opposition had always maintained that one of the first duties of the Chancellor of the Exchequer,"—this has indeed a suspicious smack. Is the significance of the qualifying article general or particular? If the former, then is it only in opposition that room can be found for these generous sentiments? Alas for their object, if this be so! But these speculations are ungenerous. The chance comes too seldom, for Sir William of all men to be refused the benefit of the doubt.

"The Opposition,"—so runs *The Times's* report—"The Opposition has always maintained that one of the first duties of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was to remedy the inequality between the taxation on real and personal property . . . the country had a right to expect that there should be a serious attempt to redress that injustice in our financial system." What any country has at any time a right to expect from any government it is perhaps rash to

decide, but it is certain that a large class in this country would welcome such an attempt as Sir William indicates. I have unfortunately never had either time or occasion to master more than, if truly so much as, the rudiments of the financial alphabet; but the distinction between the two kinds of property recognized by lawyers and Chancellors of the Exchequer is comprehensible to the poorest intelligence, using the epithet in both its senses. The property of the class I refer to is personal in the most literal meaning of the adjective. Of real property few if any of its members can boast even so much as Charles Surface; the bow-pots out of the window they may have, but scarcely the pointers or the ponies. The income of such an one is earned by the sweat of his brow as surely if not as literally as the income of him who tills the field or reaps the harvest. It lives only in and by him, and with him it perishes. Waiving all question of right, it seems at least then not unreasonable to hope that the Chancellor of the Exchequer (whoever he may be) in preparing his next budget may take some thought for these men, as well as for the householders, the tea-merchants and silversmiths, that he may see, or at least look for his way to removing, I will not say an injustice or a grievance but, a burden that presses very sorely on a hard-working and mostly inoffensive class of her Majesty's subjects.

I have no wish to declaim. These leaves know nothing of that fierce breath (Casca had used a different epithet) in which the leaves of Hyde Park shiver on the workman's day of rest. But if one considers it a

moment, the inequality—for I will not even use Sir William's sterner phrase—of this part of our financial system must surely strike the least revolutionary and mildest mannered of mortals. There are doubtless some who have not forgotten Matthew Arnold's speech in returning thanks for the toast of Literature at the dinner of the Royal Academy nine years ago. With the playful irony he could use so well, and the secret of which he has not left behind him, he commented on the presence in that brilliant and splendid company of "such an inutility as a poor man of letters." But he consoled himself with the assurance of his hosts' sympathy. They and he, representatives of Art and Literature, were in the same boat. Between them and him there was a tie unknown to their grander guests. "Take one point only," he said. "Our struggle—yours and ours—what do they know of it? What do they know of it, these favourites of fortune, for whom existence, at any rate, has been always secure and easy, and who, so far as the great first needs of our poor mortality are concerned—lodging, food and raiment—never passed an anxious hour; what do they know of the struggle through which even the most gifted and successful artists and authors have often to pass at the outset, and from which many and many a one among us never emerges? What do they know, by the sharp experience of themselves or of those dear to them, of all that tragical history of

The fear that kills,
And hope that is unwilling to be fed;
Cold, pain, and labour, and all fleshly ills,
And mighty poets in their misery dead?

They know nothing of it, they can know nothing of it. But so long as Art and Literature exist, so long will the artist and the man of letters have an indestructible bond of sympathy in the common experience of that stern apprenticeship which both must so often traverse." These are the men I speak of; the men who are now

serving that stern apprenticeship, and of whom many perhaps are destined never to win clear of it. Even when the bitterness of his early years had passed Johnson still called himself an old struggler, and it is for the strugglers, old and young, whatever the field of their struggle, that I would venture to intercede.

Take the case, for instance, of Southey. No man ever lived more plainly or worked harder than Southey; yet he never had a year's income in advance, we are told, till in 1835, when he was sixty-one years old, Sir Robert Peel settled a pension of £300 on him and offered him a baronetcy which he had the good sense to decline. Eight-and-twenty years earlier, in 1807, a pension of £160 a year had been conferred on him through the good offices of his staunch friend Wynn, who had hitherto allowed him a similar sum annually. When he was forty-four the unexpected payment of a bad debt enabled him to buy £300 in the Three-per-cents. "I have £100 already there," he wrote with a mournful touch of irony, "and shall then be worth £12 per annum." Three years later the £100 had grown to £625, the gatherings of half the most studious and blameless life-time of which the annals of our literature hold record. And this man was Poet-Laureate of England (not quite one of her best, perhaps) and had enriched our literature with some of its finest prose. He had a wife and family, and for the greater part of his life he had to provide for them out of his brain the roof that sheltered them, the food they eat and the clothes they wore. Had sickness stopped the daily task, they must have starved or been saved from starving only by charity. Yet were Southey living now, that hard-won income would be taxed in the same proportion as the incomes from which the favourites of fortune secure their easy existence. And there are hundreds, thousands of men now in Southey's position, though without Southey's talents and without very

possibly the assured market for such as they have that he was so fortunate as to find. The field of harvest has doubtless widened since Southey's day, but how immeasurably greater is the number of labourers seeking for employment. The favourite of fortune has his uses also and his responsibilities. I am far from saying that he does not deserve his fortune, far from thinking that the young man who has been born into lands and houses and a million of money is not quite as likely to prove a useful citizen and to do as much good in his generation, as he who throughout his life has been forced to rise up early and take rest late and eat the bread of carefulness. Nor am I thinking of those who, as the phrase goes, make hay while the sun shines and look to others for shelter when the storm comes. I am thinking only of those whose daily bread, and often the daily bread of other mouths than theirs, can be earned only by the daily toil; who, while health and strength is with them can bear their burden manfully and cheerfully enough, uncomplaining if unresting; but who, not careless of the future, heaven knows, but taking thought of it rather by night and day, can yet find no answer, or no answer but one, to the terrible question,—what shall be their fate, and the fate of those dear to them, when hand and brain can work no more? I am thinking, in a word, of those whose lives the Prince of Wales described to the members and guests of the Literary Fund with simple and touching eloquence that none of those whose cause he pleaded need wish or hope to better. The wind, they say, is tempered to the shorn lamb; perhaps, but let the lamb then be shorn according to his fleece. Is it unreasonable to think that no serious loss would happen to the State, and much relief to many of its members, if these poor strugglers were allowed to bear a proportionately lighter burden than those happy souls, whose happiness indeed no honest struggler grudges, but who have earned

it by no more laborious process than being born their fathers' sons?

And this, I say, is no revolutionary thought, but indeed quite otherwise; it is a return to the milder measures of our fathers. The law under which this particular species of personal property is taxed is of comparatively modern date. Sir Robert Peel, the benefactor of Southey and of other deserving strugglers, wrought this evil thing in 1842. Some thirty years before that time an attempt had been made by the commissioners of the income-tax to include in their schedule what may for the sake of distinction be called intellectual property, and the body on which this experiment was made was no other than Sir Walter Scott's. In the year 1813 Scott (not yet Sir Walter) was requested to return an account of the profits of his literary exertions during the last three years. As these, among other less considered trifles, would have included *The Lady of the Lake* and *Rokeby*, they would have materially increased the sum of his tax. But he demurred on the ground that such a claim went beyond the statute, and the Scotch lawyers supported him. The commissioners stood to their guns, and Scott, as was his wont, stood to his. A case was prepared for the consideration of some of the highest authorities at the English Bar, including Sir Samuel Romilly. They were unanimous that the right was with Scott, and eventually after a tedious correspondence the Lords of the Treasury instructed the commissioners to abandon their claim, and decided that for the future the profits arising from literary labour were not to be taxed.

"I have thought it worth while," writes Lockhart, "to preserve some record of this decision, and of the authorities on which it rested, in case such a demand should ever be renewed hereafter." Alas! there was to come

—a day more dark and drear,
And a more memorable year,

when the demand would be renewed

and "renewed successfully! I well remember a dear friend of mine, at that time engaged in an animated correspondence with the centurions of the revenue on this very point, pointing out this passage to me in high glee, and starting off with the volume under his arm to convict the Treasury, as he bravely phrased it, out of its own mouth. Some days later I asked him how he had fared. He shook his head, answering much as the English soldier answered the dying Dundee at Killiecrankie, that it had fared ill for him but well for his sovereign. He had read the passage to the commissioner who had listened most courteously and professed himself extremely interested; but what, might he ask, what was the date of that valuable and entertaining work? My friend, with a sinking heart, replied that the date was 1837-9. "Though his name was not Winter," said the poor fellow, ruefully misquoting one of Hook's epigrams, "his actions were summary. He referred me to a confounded thing called Schedule D, under which the present tax was levied, and which had made Romilly's and all the big-wigs's law as dead as Gracchus's." But it is never too late to mend. Let Mr. Goschen, now that he has sweetened our tea and added a new polish to our plate, turn his attention to the poor inutilities, to the patient ranks of strugglers of all arms. Even the greatest statesman may find it not beneath him to have earned the gratitude of Grub Street.

OF HISTORICAL ACCURACY.

It is a dangerous matter for any man who has not been sealed of the tribe to venture an opinion on a point of history,—dangerous especially for one who is, as the Roman citizen described himself, in respect of a fine workman, but, as you would say, a cobbler. But the warfare which is being perpetually waged over what we are pleased to call accuracy turns

really upon two distinct questions, though they are often, perhaps generally, confounded; and on one of these it is within the power of the least even as of the greatest to be certain, while of the other it may with equal truth be said that absolute certainty lies within the power of no man. There are questions of fact and questions of opinion. About the latter I say nothing for the present, but it is surely clear that any man who will be at the pains may satisfy himself on the former. To settle the proper place, the relative value and significance of any particular act, is the work of the trained and practised historian; and his it also is to decide on the most probable of the many possibilities which form indeed, if these skilful conjecturers would but own it, the larger proportion of our knowledge of past times and men. But the hard, bare literal fact, when once it has been placed on record, lies as open to the fool as to the wise man.

Of all historians, perhaps not even excepting Hallam, Mr. Gardiner is the most patient, the most conscientious, the most judicious. So intense is his devotion to the truth, so earnest his desire to do justice to all men, that he will permit no sacrifice to the Graces of Literature. In his austere rejection of the blandishments of those wanton hussies, he resembles rather a monk of the Thebaid than a man of letters of the nineteenth century, a title indeed which he would very possibly resent as an impertinence; and he may be regarded if not as the founder, at least as the capital instance of that school of writers who will not allow literature any part or lot in history, and who can find no deadlier reproach for a historian than to call him (in their sovereign contempt for the niceties of our language) a *stylist*. He would be a brave man indeed who would lightly venture to charge Mr. Gardiner with inaccuracy, and he would be a rash man; for though, as befits an earnest single-minded student, Mr. Gardiner has invariably (as is well known) abstained

from all controversy or criticism, he has attracted to himself a band of devoted adherents who resent all encroachments on their master's domain with singular ferocity. To find this Aristides of history sharing the common frailties of humanity cannot but be consoling to those poor smatterers to whom it is never granted to go right even by accident. And this consolation Mr. Gardiner has afforded in the last example he has given of his historical skill,—in the article he has written on Montrose for the twenty-second volume of the Dictionary of National Biography, which is moreover a signal instance of the unbending austerity of his method. In a work of this class proportion is of course essential, and self-denial must be sternly practised. Nor indeed would it be possible to present a juster view of Montrose's character or a more exact chronicle of the facts of his life within so small a compass. But to write of him, of this brilliant, heroic creature, with the cold precision that one would almost hesitate to apply to a rhomboid, argues a suppression, a stoicism to which fiction only can furnish a parallel. Once (so runs the story) two Englishmen were travelling in Spain. It was long before the steam-engine had been heard in the peninsula, and travelling was even more rugged and uncomfortable than, so some tell you, it is now. Late in the evening our friends, having miscalculated their distance, found themselves obliged to stay for the night at a lonely inn in a neighbourhood that bore a very indifferent repute. It was an ill-looking, ill-smelling place, and the landlord matched it. However, there was no help for it, and after a meagre supper the tired Englishmen were shown into the only spare bedroom in the house. The night passed undisturbed, and as early as might be next morning the travellers were on the road again. They were cool phlegmatic men, typical Englishmen according to the Continental notion of the race. For several miles no word passed between them, till one,

in the same tone and with much the same interest as he might have wished his companion *good morning*, said, as he helped himself to a liberal pinch of snuff, "Did you notice that fellow with his throat cut under your bed last night?" "Yes," answered the other, without looking up from his book. Here the conversation ended. "Montrose, in his scarlet cassock, was hanged in the Grassmarket." In these words, and in these words only, is Mr. Gardiner content to describe one of the most terrible and affecting scenes that even Scottish history can show.

And the curious part of it is that Montrose was not hanged in the Grassmarket. Conceive Mr. Gardiner's indignation, and the fury of those about Mr. Gardiner, on reading in the pages of some wretched *stylist* that Strafford was beheaded at Tyburn or Raleigh on Tower-hill! Yet really this mistake is no whit less excusable. Montrose was hanged at the city cross in the High-street, which then stood about midway between the Tolbooth and the Tron Church. There is no doubt about it. Sir James Balfour has recorded the brutal sentence, which he heard read, in his *Annals of Scotland*; and there are at least three contemporary accounts by eye-witnesses, two of which are printed in Napier's *Memoirs of Montrose*, a biographer to whose patient research Mr. Gardiner pays a well-deserved compliment. One of these was written by the Rev. James Fraser, Chaplain to the Lord Lovat of that day. Another is in a volume of original manuscripts in the British Museum; it bears no signature, but appears to be an enlarged version of an account, signed H.P., printed in the Harleian Miscellany (vi. 234-5, ed. 1808-11) from a thin quarto of eight pages published in London seven days after the execution. Besides these Napier has printed what he not inaptly terms the butcher's bill, the account paid by the City for the erection of the gallows, which was of the extraordinary height of thirty feet, and for other expenses

in the brutal business. In this occurs the following item: "Paid to the workmen for bearing of the deals, puncheons, ladder, galbert, &c., to and from the Cross for the execution aforesaid, £6 13s. 4d. [in Scots money of course]." The cross was known indifferently as the city or market-cross, and sometimes even as the market-place. It was the latter designation that probably led Sir Walter Scott, writing his *Tales of a Grandfather* in a hurry and amid so many and pressing distractions, to confuse it with the Grassmarket, which from a period shortly after Montrose's death down almost to Sir Walter's own day had been the common place of execution. Napier himself in his earlier works made the same mistake. Wishart, or whoever wrote the second part of the memoirs that go under his name, does not specify the spot. But Clarendon does so and rightly, and this it is perhaps that has led Mr. Gardiner wrong. He has but a poor opinion of Clarendon; "his usual habit of blundering," "his well known carelessness about details whenever he has a good story to tell,"—these are some of the phrases he permits himself to use of his great forerunner in the history of our civil war. The mere fact therefore, that Clarendon has hanged Montrose at the cross, would be almost sufficient to make Mr. Gardiner hang him in the Grassmarket.

This is not the only error into which Mr. Gardiner has fallen in his article on Montrose. He writes of "the only son who survived him;" but two at least out of the four sons born to him were alive at the time of his death. The peerages, it is true, allow only two sons to Montrose, the elder of whom died during his father's campaign at Gordon Castle in 1645 when only in his fifteenth year. James, the second son and his father's successor, was taken prisoner by the Covenant when a schoolboy soon after his brother's death and confined for some months in Edinburgh Castle. At the time of his father's execution he was in Flanders,

but how long he had been there is unknown; in December 1648 he was in Scotland, and still in the power of the Covenanters who in that month, as appears by the minutes of the General Assembly, were pleased to interest themselves in his education. As his father was led a captive to Edinburgh, in May 1650, he halted for a day at Kinnaird Castle where he was allowed to see two of his children then in charge of their grandfather Lord Southesk. If James was one of these the other must have been Robert, the third son, born in 1636-7. But as James was certainly in Flanders on the 21st of the month, it is more probable that the two were Robert and David, who was born in 1638. It is known that Robert survived his father, for he is mentioned as being present with his elder brother when the scattered remains of their father were collected after the Restoration and laid with all the solemn splendour of a state funeral in the grave of his grandfather, the Viceroy, in St. Giles's Church. The account of the ceremony was printed in the *Mercurius Caledonius*, a contemporary Scottish newspaper edited by Thomas Saintserf, who had been Montrose's secretary during the latter years of his life, and again in a pamphlet written by the same hand and published in the same year. Both accounts may be read in the appendix to the second volume of Napier's *Memoirs of Montrose*, and in the Harleian Miscellany, viii., 236-51. The names neither of Robert nor David are recorded in any peerage. But in the minutes of the Committee of Estates Robert's name appears more than once during the year 1645 as son "to the late Earl of Montrose," the Marquis (a title which was of course not recognized by Argyll's government) being then under the ban of the Covenant's excommunication and to be mentioned only as James Graham with such savoury additions as its vocabulary might suggest; and David's existence was only discovered some thirty years ago in the baptismal register at Montrose.

These, to be sure, are but "sma' sums, sma' sums," as Baillie Jarvie observed of another matter. What does it avail for our estimate of Montrose's character or of the part he played in affairs to know whether he was hung in one quarter of a certain town or in another, how many sons were born to him and how many of them survived him? It avails not one jot. Mr. Gardiner has not this knowledge, and yet he has drawn Montrose to the life. May not this then suggest to a certain class of historical reviewers that they would do better, instead of so laboriously raking in the by-ways of history to prove their author wrong, to ask themselves what is his general view of men and affairs, whether on the broad essential questions his knowledge is exact and his judgment sound? And for that particular band of Mr. Gardiner's admirers may it not also suggest that, when a writer of his great and unchallenged authority is found going wrong in how small a matter soever, it were well for them in the future to deal more gently with those poor tiros who venture into the historical maze, and not to assume that everybody must inevitably be wrong who differs from Mr. Gardiner?

So much for facts; what follows is matter only of opinion. In his remarks on the social position of the clergy Mr. Gardiner, in a note to the seventh volume of his *History* (p. 304, ed. 1884), condescends to one of those flings at Macaulay without which no history would now be considered complete. "During several generations," Macaulay has written in his famous third chapter, commenting on Elizabeth's injunction that no clergyman should marry a servant-girl without the consent of her master or mistress—"During several generations accordingly the relation between divines and handmaidens was a theme for endless jest; nor would it be easy to find, in the comedy of the seventeenth century, a single instance of a clergyman who wins a spouse above the rank of a cook." "Macaulay exaggerates," says Mr. Gardiner,

and gives Fletcher's *Scornful Lady* as a proof of his exaggeration. Undoubtedly Parson Roger wins a spouse above the rank of a cook when he wins Abigail; but inasmuch as Macaulay himself quotes this play as one of the few exceptions to what he justly states to have been the common practice, it is hard to see how he can, in this instance at any rate, be convicted of exaggeration. It is not, I venture to think, Macaulay who has exaggerated but Mr. Gardiner who has misconstrued Macaulay.

But this is not all. Mr. Gardiner is not content to stop here. He goes on to show that Abigail was in fact a lady of equal birth with her mistress, a waiting gentlewoman, one who had taken service, as Buckingham's mother did, on account of her poverty. Buckingham's mother, it may be observed, before her marriage with Sir George Villiers, was received into the family of her kinswoman, Lady Beaumont of Coleorton, and Mr. Gardiner himself shows evidence for disbelieving the story that she ever served in a menial office. Mrs. Younglove (to give Abigail her proper name) was on the contrary, by her own confession, what we now call a lady's maid, and I cannot think that she was, or that Fletcher intended to depict her as, quite so much of a gentlewoman as Mr. Gardiner supposes. However, this must of course be matter of opinion, on which every man who has read the play is entitled to his own. But it is at least clear that Young Loveless, brother to the Lady's suitor, did not think very nobly of her. In the very first scene when the brothers arrive at the Lady's house we get a tolerably clear idea of this gentlewoman. Young Loveless passes a somewhat unsavoury jest upon her morals, and on being asked by his brother how he came to know about her, explains himself after the epigrammatic fashion of the time. "To this day," he goes on, "she loves youth of eighteen. She heard a tale how Cupid struck her in love with a great lord in the tilt-yard, but he never saw her; yet she, in kindness, would

needs wear a willow-garland at his wedding. She loved all the players in the last queen's time once over; she was struck when they acted lovers, and forsook some when they played murderers. She has nine spur-ryals, and the servants say she hoards old gold; and she herself pronounces angrily, that the farrier's eldest son (or her mistress's husband's clerk that shall be) that marries her, shall make her a jointure of fourscore pounds a year. She tells tales of the serving-men—"Enough, I know her," here breaks in the elder brother, and assuredly it is not the fault of Fletcher if we do not know her too before the play is played out.

The truth is that, though Abigail certainly takes rank above a cook, Fletcher's comedy so far from proving Macaulay wrong, proves him right on more sides than one. It is not only the character of the woman whom he

is content to take as wife that marks Parson Roger's position in my Lady's household, but his own confession as well. A domestic chaplain who is sent on menial errands and has his head broken by the butler, can hardly be paraded as a favourable example of the reverence paid to his cloth. "Everything," wrote Buckle, and on this point at least there could be no better authority,—“Everything Mr. Macaulay has said on the contempt into which the clergy fell in the reign of Charles the Second is perfectly accurate; and from evidence which I have collected I know that this very able writer, of whose immense research few people are competent judges, has rather under-stated the case than over-stated it.” Mr. Gardiner will have to call better witnesses than Mrs. Younglove and Sir Roger to prove Macaulay wrong, or be content for once to share the reproach he has cast upon Clarendon.

WITHOUT BENEFIT OF CLERGY.

"BUT if it be a girl?"

"Lord of my life, it cannot be. I have prayed for so many nights, and sent gifts to Sheikh Badl's shrine so often, that I know God will give us a son—a man-child that shall grow into a man. Think of this and be glad. My mother shall be his mother till I can take him again, and the mullah of the Pattan mosque shall cast his nativity—God send he be born in an auspicious hour!—and then, and then thou wilt never weary of me, thy slave."

"Since when hast thou been a slave, my queen?"

"Since the beginning—till this mercy came to me. How could I be sure of thy love when I knew that I had been bought with silver?"

"Nay, that was the dowry. I paid it to thy mother."

"And she has buried it, and sits upon it all day long like a hen. What talk is yours of dower! I was bought as though I had been a Lucknow dancing-girl instead of a child."

"Art thou sorry for the sale?"

"I have sorrowed; but to-day I am glad. Thou wilt never cease to love me now?—answer, my king."

"Never—never. No."

"Not even though the *mem-log*—the white women of thy own blood—love thee? And remember, I have watched them driving in the evening; they are very fair."

"I have seen fire-balloons by the hundred. I have seen the moon, and—then I saw no more fire-balloons."

Ameera clapped her hands and laughed. "Very good talk," she said. Then with an assumption of great stateliness: "It is enough. Thou hast my permission to depart,—if thou wilt."

The man did not move. He was

sitting on a low red-lacquered couch in a room furnished only with a blue and white floor-cloth, some rugs, and a very complete collection of native cushions. At his feet sat a woman of sixteen, and she was all but all the world in his eyes. By every rule and law she should have been otherwise, for he was an Englishman, and she a Mussulman's daughter bought two years before from her mother, who, being left without money, would have sold Ameera shrieking to the Prince of Darkness if the price had been sufficient.

It was a contract entered into with a light heart; but even before the girl had reached her bloom she came to fill the greater portion of John Holden's life. For her, and the withered hag her mother, he had taken a little house overlooking the great red-walled city, and found,—when the marigolds had sprung up by the well in the courtyard, and Ameera had established herself according to her own ideas of comfort, and her mother had ceased grumbling at the inadequacy of the cooking-places, the distance from the daily market, and at matters of house-keeping in general,—that the house was to him his home. Any one could enter his bachelor's bungalow by day or night, and the life that he led there was an unlovely one. In the house in the city his feet only could pass beyond the outer courtyard to the women's rooms; and when the big wooden gate was bolted behind him he was king in his own territory, with Ameera for queen. And there was going to be added to this kingdom a third person whose arrival Holden felt inclined to resent. It interfered with his perfect happiness. It disarranged the orderly peace of the house that was his own. But Ameera was wild with delight at the

thought of it, and her mother not less so. The love of a man, and particularly a white man, was at the best an inconstant affair, but it might, both women argued, be held fast by a baby's hands. "And then," Ameera would always say, "then he will never care for the white *mem-log*. I hate them all—I hate them all."

"He will go back to his own people in time," said the mother; "but by the blessing of God that time is yet afar off."

Holden sat silent on the couch thinking of the future, and his thoughts were not pleasant. The drawbacks of a double life are manifold. The Government, with singular care, had ordered him out of the station for a fortnight on special duty in the place of a man who was watching by the bedside of a sick wife. The verbal notification of the transfer had been edged by a cheerful remark that Holden ought to think himself lucky in being a bachelor and a free man. He came to break the news to Ameera.

"It is not good," she said slowly, "but it is not all bad. There is my mother here, and no harm will come to me—unless indeed I die of pure joy. Go thou to thy work and think no troublesome thoughts. When the days are done I believe . . . nay, I am sure. And—and then I shall lay *him* in thy arms, and thou wilt love me for ever. The train goes to-night, at midnight is it not? Go now, and do not let thy heart be heavy by cause of me. But thou wilt not delay in returning? Thou wilt not stay on the road to talk to the bold white *mem-log*. Come back to me swiftly, my life."

As he left the courtyard to reach his horse that was tethered to the gatepost, Holden spoke to the white-haired old watchman who guarded the house, and bade him under certain contingencies despatch the filled-up telegraph-form that Holden gave him. It was all that could be done, and with the sensations of a man who has attended his own funeral Holden went away by the night-mail to his exile. Every

hour of the day he dreaded the arrival of the telegram, and every hour of the night he pictured to himself the death of Ameera. In consequence his work for the State was not of first-rate quality, nor was his temper towards his colleagues of the most amiable. The fortnight ended without a sign from his home, and, torn to pieces by his anxieties, Holden returned to be swallowed up for two precious hours by a dinner at the club, wherein he heard, as a man hears in a swoon, voices telling him how execrably he had performed the other man's duties, and how he had endeared himself to all his associates. Then he fled on horseback through the night with his heart in his mouth. There was no answer at first to his blows on the gate, and he had just wheeled his horse round to kick it in when Pir Khan appeared with a lantern and held his stirrup.

"Has aught occurred?" said Holden.

"The news does not come from my mouth, Protector of the Poor, but—" He held out his shaking hand as befitted the bearer of good news who is entitled to a reward.

Holden hurried through the courtyard. A light burned in the upper room. His horse neighed in the gateway and he heard a shrill little wail that sent all the blood into the apple of his throat. It was a new voice, but it did not prove that Ameera was alive.

"Who is there?" he called up the narrow brick staircase.

There was a cry of delight from Ameera, and then the voice of the mother, tremulous with old age and pride—"We be two women and—the—man—thy—son."

On the threshold of the room Holden stepped on a naked dagger, that was laid there to avert ill-luck, and it broke at the hilt under his impatient heel.

"God is great!" cooed Ameera in the half-light. "Thou hast taken his misfortunes on thy head."

"Ay, but how is it with thee, life of my life? Old woman, how is it with her?"

"She has forgotten her sufferings for joy that the child is born. There is no harm; but speak softly," said the mother.

"It only needed thy presence to make me all well," said Ameera. "My king, thou hast been very long away. What gifts hast thou for me? Ah, ah! It is I that bring gifts this time. Look, my life, look. Was there ever such a babe? Nay, I am too weak even to clear my arm from him."

"Rest then, and do not talk. I am here, *bachari* (little woman)."

"Well said, for there is a bond and a heel-rope (*peecharae*) between us now that nothing can break. Look—canst thou see in this light? He is without spot or blemish. Never was such a man-child. *Ya illah!* he shall be a pundit—no, a trooper of the Queen. And, my life, dost thou love me as well as ever, though I am faint and sick and worn? Answer truly."

"Yea. I love as I have loved, with all my soul. Lie still, pearl, and rest."

"Then do not go. Sit by my side here—so. Mother, the lord of this house needs a cushion. Bring it." There was an almost imperceptible movement on the part of the new life that lay in the hollow of Ameera's arm. "Aho!" she said, her voice breaking with love. "The babe is a champion from his birth. He is kicking me in the side with mighty kicks. Was there ever such a babe! And he is ours to us—thine and mine. Put thy hand on his head, but carefully, for he is very young, and men are unskilled in such matters."

Very cautiously Holden touched with the tips of his fingers the downy head.

"He is of the Faith," said Ameera; "for lying here in the night-watches I whispered the call to prayer and the profession of faith into his ears. And it is most marvellous that he was born upon a Friday, as I was born. Be careful of him, my life; but he can almost grip with his hands."

Holden found one helpless little hand that closed feebly on his finger.

And the clutch ran through his limbs till it settled about his heart. Till then his sole thought had been for Ameera. He began to realize that there was some one else in the world, but he could not feel that it was a veritable son with a soul. He sat down to think; and Ameera dozed lightly.

"Get hence, *sahib*," said her mother under her breath. "It is not good that she should find you here on waking. She must be still."

"I go," said Holden submissively. "Here be rupees. See that my *baba* gets fat and finds all that he needs."

The chink of the silver roused Ameera. "I am his mother, and no hireling," she said weakly. "Shall I look to him more or less for the sake of money? Mother, give it back. I have born my lord a son."

The deep sleep of weakness came upon her almost before the sentence was completed. Holden went down to the courtyard very softly with his heart at ease. Pir Khan, the old watchman, was chuckling with delight. "This house is now complete," he said, and without further comment thrust into Holden's hands the hilt of a sabre worn many years ago when he, Pir Khan, served the Queen in the police. The bleat of a tethered goat came from the well-kerb.

"There be two," said Pir Khan, "two goats of the best. I bought them, and they cost much money; and since there is no birth-party assembled their flesh will be all mine. Strike craftily, *sahib!* 'Tis an ill-balanced sabre at the best. Wait till they raise their heads from cropping the marigolds."

"And why?" said Holden, bewildered.

"For the birth-sacrifice. What else? Otherwise the child being unguarded from fate may die. The Protector of the Poor knows the fitting words to be said."

Holden had learned them once with little thought that he would ever speak them in earnest. The touch of the cold sabre-hilt in his palm turned suddenly to the clinging grip of the child

up stairs—the child that was his own son—and a dread of loss filled him.

"Strike!" said Pir Khan. "Never life came into the world but life was paid for it. See, the goats have raised their heads. Now! With a drawing cut!"

Hardly knowing what he did Holden cut twice as he muttered the Mohammedan prayer that runs:—"Almighty! In place of this my son I offer life for life, blood for blood, head for head, bone for bone, hair for hair, skin for skin." The waiting horse snorted and bounded in his pickets at the smell of the raw blood that spirted over Holden's riding-boots.

"Well smitten!" said Pir Khan wiping the sabre. "A swordsmen was lost in thee. Go with a light heart, Heaven-born. I am thy servant, and the servant of thy son. May the Presence live a thousand years and . . . the flesh of the goats is all mine!" Pir Khan drew back richer by a month's pay. Holden swung himself into the saddle and rode off through the low-hanging wood-smoke of the evening. He was full of riotous exultation, alternating with a vast vague tenderness directed towards no particular object, that made him choke as he bent over the neck of his uneasy horse. "I never felt like this in my life," he thought. "I'll go to the club and pull myself together."

A game of pool was beginning, and the room was full of men. Holden entered, eager to get to the light and the company of his fellows, singing at the top of his voice:

In Baltimore a-walking, a lady I did meet!

"Did you?" said the club-secretary from his corner. "Did she happen to tell you that your boots were wringing wet? Great goodness, man, it's blood!"

"Bosh!" said Holden, picking his cue from the rack. "May I cut in? It's dew. I've been riding through high crops. My faith! my boots are in a mess though!"

And if it be a girl she shall wear a wedding ring,
And if it be a boy he shall fight for his king,
With his dirk, and his cap, and his little jacket blue,
He shall walk the quarter-deck—"

"Yellow on blue—green next player," said the marker monotonously.

"*He shall walk the quarter-deck,—* am I green, marker? *He shall walk the quarter-deck,—* eh! that's a bad shot, —*as his daddy used to do!*"

"I don't see that you have anything to crow about," said a zealous junior civilian acidly. "The Government is not exactly pleased with your work when you relieved Sanders."

"Does that mean a wiggling from head-quarters?" said Holden with an abstracted smile. "I think I can stand it."

The talk beat up round the ever-fresh subject of each man's work, and steadied Holden till it was time to go to his dark empty bungalow, where his butler received him as one who knew all his affairs. Holden remained awake for the greater part of the night, and his dreams were pleasant ones.

II.

"How old is he now?"

"*Ya illah!* What a man's question! He is all but six weeks old; and on this night I go up to the house-top with thee, my life, to count the stars. For that is auspicious. And he was born on a Friday under the sign of the sun, and it has been told to me that he will outlive us both and get wealth. Can we wish for aught better, beloved?"

"There is nothing better. Let us go up to the roof, and thou shalt count the stars—but a few only, for the sky is heavy with cloud."

"The winter rains are late, and maybe they come out of season. Come, before all the stars are hid. I have put on my richest jewels."

"Thou hast forgotten the best of all."

"*Ai!* Ours. He comes also. He has never yet seen the skies."

Ameera climbed the narrow staircase that led to the flat roof. The child, placid and unwinking, lay in the hollow of her right arm, gorgeous in silver-fringed muslin with a small skull-cap on his head. Ameera wore all that she valued most. The diamond nose-stud that takes the place of the Western patch in drawing attention to the curve of the nostril, the gold ornament in the centre of the forehead studded with tallow-drop emeralds and flawed rubies, the heavy circlet of beaten gold that was fastened round her neck by the softness of the pure metal, and the chinking curb-patterned silver anklets hanging low over the rosy ankle-bone. She was dressed in jade-green muslin as befitted a daughter of the Faith, and from shoulder to elbow and elbow to wrist ran bracelets of silver tied with floss silk, frail glass bangles slipped over the wrist in proof of the slenderness of the hand, and certain heavy gold bracelets that had no part in her country's ornaments but, since they were Holden's gift and fastened with a cunning European snap, delighted her immensely.

They sat down by the low white parapet of the roof, overlooking the city and its lights.

"They are happy down there," said Ameera. "But I do not think that they are as happy as we. Nor do I think the white *mem-log* are as happy. And thou?"

"I know they are not."

"How dost thou know?"

"They give their children over to the nurses."

"I have never seen that," said Ameera with a sigh, "nor do I wish to see. *Ahi!*"—she dropped her head on Holden's shoulder,—"I have counted forty stars, and I am tired. Look at the child, love of my life, he is counting too."

The baby was staring with round

eyes at the dark of the heavens. Ameera placed him in Holden's arms, and he lay there without a cry.

"What shall we call him among ourselves?" she said. "Look! Art thou ever tired of looking? He carries thy very eyes. But the mouth—"

"Is thine, most dear. Who should know better than I?"

"'Tis such a feeble mouth. Oh, so small! And yet it holds my heart between its lips. Give him to me now. He has been too long away."

"Nay, let him lie; he has not yet begun to cry."

"When he cries thou wilt give him back—eh! What a man of mankind thou art! If he cried he were only the dearer to me. But, my life, what little name shall we give him?"

The small body lay close to Holden's heart. It was utterly helpless and very soft. He scarcely dared to breathe for fear of crushing it. The caged green parrot that is regarded as a sort of guardian spirit in most native households moved on its perch and fluttered a drowsy wing.

"There is the answer," said Holden. "Mian Mittu has spoken. He shall be the parrot. When he is ready he will talk mightily and run about. Mian Mittu is the parrot in thy—in the Mus-sulman tongue, is it not?"

"Why put me so far off?" said Ameera fretfully. "Let it be like unto some English name—but not wholly. For he is mine."

"Then call him Tota, for that is likest English."

"Ay, Tota, and that is still the parrot. Forgive me, my lord, for a minute ago, but in truth he is too little to wear all the weight of Mian Mittu for name. He shall be Tota—our Tota to us. Hearest thou, oh, small one? Littlest, thou art Tota." She touched the child's cheek, and he waking wailed, and it was necessary to return him to his mother, who soothed him with the wonderful rhyme of *Aré koko, Ja ré koko!* which says:

Oh, crow ! Go crow ! Baby's sleeping sound,
And the wild plums grow in the jungle,
only a penny a pound.
Only a penny a pound, *baba*, only a penny a pound.

Reassured many times as to the price of those plums, Tota cuddled himself down to sleep. The two sleek, white well-bullocks in the courtyard were steadily chewing the cud of their evening meal ; old Pir Khan squatted at the head of Holden's horse, his police sabre across his knees, pulling drowsily at a big water-pipe that croaked like a bull-frog in a pond. Ameera's mother sat spinning in the lower verandah, and the wooden gate was shut and barred. The music of a marriage procession came to the roof above the gentle hum of the city, and a string of flying-foxes crossed the face of the low moon.

"I have prayed," said Ameera after a long pause, "I have prayed for two things. First, that I may die in thy stead if thy death is demanded, and in the second that I may die in the place of the child. I have prayed to the Prophet and to Beebee Miriam [the Virgin Mary]. Thinkest thou either will hear?"

"From thy lips who would not hear the lightest word?"

"I asked for straight talk, and thou hast given me sweet talk. Will my prayers be heard?"

"How can I say? God is very good."

"Of that I am not sure. Listen now. When I die, or the child dies, what is thy fate? Living, thou wilt return to the bold white *mem-log*, for kind calls to kind."

"Not always."

"With a woman, no ; with a man it is otherwise. Thou wilt in this life, later on, go back to thine own folk. That I could almost endure, for I should be dead. But in thy very death thou wilt be taken away to a strange place and a paradise that I do not know."

"Will it be paradise?"

"Surely, for who would harm thee? But we two—I and the child—shall be elsewhere, and we cannot come to thee, nor canst thou come to us. In the old days, before the child was born, I did not think of these things ; but now I think of them always. It is very hard talk."

"It will fall as it will fall. Tomorrow we do not know, but to-day and love we know well. Surely we are happy now."

"So happy that it were well to make our happiness assured. And thy Beebee Miriam should listen to me ; for she is also a woman. But then she would envy me ! It is not seemly for men to worship a woman."

Holden laughed aloud at Ameera's little spasm of jealousy.

"Is it not seemly? Why didst thou not turn me from worship of thee, then?"

"Thou a worshipper ! And of me ! My king, for all thy sweet words, well I know that I am thy servant and thy slave, and the dust under thy feet. And I would not have it otherwise. See !"

Before Holden could prevent her she stooped forward and touched his feet ; recovering herself with a little laugh she hugged Tota closer to her bosom. Then, almost savagely—

"Is it true that the bold white *mem-log* live for three times the length of my life? Is it true that they make their marriages not before they are old women?"

"They marry as do others—when they are women."

"That I know, but they wed when they are twenty-five. Is that true?"

"That is true."

"*Ya illah !* At twenty-five ! Who would of his own will take a wife even of eighteen ? She is a woman—ageing every hour. Twenty-five ! I shall be an old woman at that age, and—Those *mem-log* remain young for ever. How I hate them !"

"What have they to do with us?"

"I cannot tell. I know only that there may now be alive on this earth

a woman ten years older than I who may come to thee and take thy love ten years after I am an old woman, grey headed, and the nurse of Tota's son. That is unjust and evil. They should die too."

"Now, for all thy years thou art a child, and shalt be picked up and carried down the staircase."

"Tota! Have a care for Tota, my lord! Thou at least art as foolish as any babe!" Ameera tucked Tota out of harm's way in the hollow of her neck, and was carried down stairs laughing in Holden's arms, while Tota opened his eyes and smiled after the manner of the lesser angels.

He was a silent infant, and, almost before Holden could realize that he was in the world, developed into a small gold-coloured little god and unquestioned despot of the house overlooking the city. Those were months of absolute happiness to Holden and Ameera—happiness withdrawn from the world, shut in behind the wooden gate that Pir Khan guarded. By day Holden did his work with an immense pity for such as were not so fortunate as himself, and a sympathy for small children that amazed and amused many mothers at the little station-gatherings. At nightfall he returned to Ameera, —Ameera full of the wondrous doings of Tota, how he had been seen to clap his hands together and move his fingers with intention and purpose—which was manifestly a miracle—how later, he had of his own initiative crawled out of his low bedstead on to the floor and swayed on both feet for the space of three breaths.

"And they were long breaths, for my heart stood still with delight," said Ameera.

Then he took the beasts into his councils—the well-bullocks, the little grey squirrels, the mongoose that lived in a hole near the well, and especially Mian Mittu, the parrot, whose tail he grievously pulled, and Mian Mittu screamed till Ameera and Holden arrived.

"Oh, villain! Child of strength!

This to thy brother on the house-top! *Tobah, tobah!* Fie! Fie! But I know a charm to make him wise as Suleiman and Aflatoun [Solomon and Plato]. Now look," said Ameera. She drew from an embroidered bag a handful of almonds. "See! we count seven. In the name of God!"

She placed Mian Mittu, very angry and rumped, on the top of his cage, and seating herself between the babe and the bird she cracked and peeled an almond less white than her teeth. "This is a true charm, my life, and do not laugh. See! I give the parrot one half and Tota the other." Mian Mittu with careful beak took his share from between Ameera's lips, and she kissed the other half into the mouth of the child, who ate it slowly with wondering eyes. "This I will do each day of seven, and without doubt he who is ours will be a bold speaker and wise. Eh, Tota, what wilt thou be when thou art a man and I am grey-headed?" Tota tucked his fat legs into adorable creases. He could crawl, but he was not going to waste the spring of his youth in idle speech. He wanted Mian Mittu's tail to tweak.

When he was advanced to the dignity of a silver belt—which, with a magic-square engraved on silver and hung round his neck, made up the greater part of his clothing—he staggered on a perilous journey down the garden to Pir Khan and proffered him all his jewels in exchange for one little ride on Holden's horse, having seen his mother's mother chaffering with pedlars in the verandah. Pir Khan wept and set the untried feet on his own grey head in sign of fealty, and brought the bold adventurer to his mother's arms, vowing that Tota would be a leader of men ere his beard was grown.

One hot evening while he sat on the roof between his father and mother watching the never-ending warfare of the kites, that the city boys flew, he demanded a kite of his own with Pir Khan to fly it, because he had a fear of dealing with anything larger than himself, and when Holden called him a

"spark," he rose to his feet and answered slowly in defence of his new-found individuality: "*Hum'park nahin hai. Hom admi hai.* (I am no spark, but a man.)"

The protest made Holden choke and devote himself very seriously to a consideration of Tota's future. He need hardly have taken the trouble. The delight of that life was too perfect to endure. Therefore it was taken away as many things are taken away in India—suddenly and without warning. The little lord of the house, as Pir Khan called him, grew sorrowful and complained of pains who had never known the meaning of pain. Ameera, wild with terror, watched him through the night, and in the dawning of the second day the life was shaken out of him by fever—the seasonal autumn fever. It seemed altogether impossible that he could die, and neither Ameera nor Holden at first believed the evidence of the little body on the bedstead. Then Ameera beat her head against the wall and would have flung herself down the well in the garden had Holden not restrained her by main force.

One mercy only was granted to Holden. He rode to his office in broad daylight and found waiting him an unusually heavy mail that demanded concentrated attention and hard work. He was not, however, alive to this kindness of the gods.

III.

THE first shock of a bullet is no more than a brisk pinch. The wrecked body does not send in its protest to the soul till ten or fifteen seconds later. Holden realized his pain slowly, exactly as he had realized his happiness, and with the same imperious necessity for hiding all trace of it. In the beginning he only felt that there had been a loss, and that Ameera needed comforting, where she sat with her head on her knees shivering as Mian Mittu from the house-top called, *Tota! Tota! Tota!* Later all his world and the daily life of it rose up to hurt him. It was an out-

rage that any one of the children at the band-stand in the evening should be alive and clamorous, when his own child lay dead. It was more than mere pain when one of them touched him, and stories told by over-fond fathers of their children's latest performances cut him to the quick. He could not declare his pain. He had neither help, comfort, nor sympathy; and Ameera at the end of each weary day would lead him through the hell of self-questioning reproach which is reserved for those who have lost a child, and believe that with a little—just a little more care—it might have been saved.

"Perhaps," Ameera would say, "I did not take sufficient heed. Did I, or did I not? The sun on the roof that day when he played so long alone and I was—*ahi!* braiding my hair—it may be that the sun then bred the fever. If I had warned him from the sun he might have lived. But, oh my life, say that I am guiltless! Thou knowest that I loved him as I love thee. Say that there is no blame on me, or I shall die—I shall die!"

"There is no blame,—before God, none. It was written and how could we do aught to save? What has been, has been. Let it go, beloved."

"He was all my heart to me. How can I let the thought go when my arm tells me every night that he is not here? *Ahi! Ahi!* Oh Tota come back to me—come back again, and let us be all together as it was before!"

"Peace, peace! For thine own sake, and for mine also, if thou lovest me—rest."

"By this I know thou dost not care; and how shouldst thou? The white men have hearts of stone and souls of iron. Oh that I had married a man of mine own people—though he beat me, and had never eaten the bread of an alien!"

"Am I an alien—mother of my son?"

"What else—*sahib?* . . . Oh forgive me—forgive! The death has driven me mad. Thou art the life of my heart, and the light of my eyes, and the breath of my life, and—and I

have put thee from me though it was but for a moment. If thou goest away to whom shall I look for help? Do not be angry. Indeed, it was the pain that spoke and not thy slave."

"I know, I know. We be two who were three. The greater need therefore that we should be one."

They were sitting on the roof as of custom. The night was a warm one in early spring, and sheet-lightning was dancing on the horizon to a broken tune played by far-off thunder. Ameera settled herself in Holden's arms.

"The dry earth is lowing like a cow for the rain, and I—I am afraid. It was not like this when we counted the stars. But thou lovest me as much as before, though a bond is taken away? Answer!"

"I love more because a new bond has come out of the sorrow that we have eaten together, and that thou knowest."

"Yea, I knew," said Ameera in a very small whisper. "But it is good to hear thee say so, my life, who art so strong to help. I will be a child no more, but a woman and an aid to thee. Listen! Give me my *sitar* and I will sing bravely."

She took the light silver-studded *sitar* and began a song of the great hero Rajah Rasalu. The hand failed on the strings, the tune halted, checked, and at a low note turned off to the poor little nursery-rhyme about the wicked crow:

And the wild plums grow in the jungle,
only a penny a pound.
Only a penny a pound, *baba*—only . . .

Then came the tears, and the piteous rebellion against fate till she slept, moaning a little in her sleep, with the right arm thrown clear of the body as though it protected something that was not there. It was after this night that life became a little easier for Holden. The ever-present pain of loss drove him into his work, and the work repaid him by filling up his mind for eight or nine hours a day. Ameera sat alone in the house and brooded, but grew happier when she understood

that Holden was more at ease, according to the custom of women. They touched happiness again, but this time with caution.

"It was because we loved Tota that he died. The jealousy of God was upon us," said Ameera. "I have hung up a large black jar before our window to turn the evil eye from us, and we must make no protestations of delight but go softly underneath the stars, lest God find us out. Is that not good talk, worthless one?"

She had shifted the accent on the word that means "beloved," in proof of the sincerity of her purpose. But the kiss that followed the new christening was a thing that any deity might have envied. They went about henceforward saying, "It is naught, it is naught;" and hoping that all the Powers heard.

The Powers were busy on other things. They had allowed thirty million people four years of plenty wherein men fed well and the crops were certain and the birth-rate rose year by year: the districts reported a purely agricultural population varying from nine hundred to two thousand to the square mile of the overburdened earth; and the Member for Lower Tooting, wandering about India in top-hat and frock-coat talked largely of the benefits of British rule, and suggested as the one thing needful the establishment of a duly qualified electoral system and a general bestowal of the franchise. His long-suffering hosts smiled and made him welcome, and when he paused to admire, with pretty picked words, the blossom of the blood-red *dhak* tree that had flowered untimely for a sign of what was coming, they smiled more than ever.

It was the Deputy Commissioner of Kot-Kumharsen, staying at the club for a day, who lightly told a tale that made Holden's blood run cold as he overheard the end.

"He won't bother any one any more. Never saw a man so astonished in my life. By Jove, I thought he meant to ask a question in the House about it. Fellow - passenger in his ship

—dined next him—bowed over by cholera and died in eighteen hours. You needn't laugh, you fellows. The Member for Lower Tooting is awfully angry about it; but he's more scared. I think he's going to take his enlightened self out of India."

"I'd give a good deal if he were knocked over. It might keep a few vestrymen of his kidney to their own parish. But what's this about cholera? It's full early for anything of that kind," said a warden of an unprofitable salt-lick.

"Don't know," said the Deputy Commissioner reflectively. "We've got locusts with us. There's sporadic cholera all along the north—at least we're calling it sporadic for decency's sake. The spring crops are short in five districts, and nobody seems to know where the rains are. It's nearly March now. I don't want to scare anybody, but it seems to me that Nature's going to audit her accounts with a big red pencil this summer."

"Just when I wanted to take leave, too!" said a voice across the room.

"There won't be much leave this year, but there ought to be a great deal of promotion. I've come in to persuade the Government to put my pet canal on the list of famine relief-works. It's an ill-wind that blows no good. I shall get that canal finished at last."

"Is it the old programme then," said Holden; "famine, fever, and cholera?"

"Oh no. Only local scarcity and an unusual prevalence of seasonal sickness. You'll find it all in the reports if you live till next year. You're a lucky chap. You haven't got a wife to put out of harm's way. The hill-stations ought to be full of women this year."

"I think you're inclined to exaggerate the talk in the *bazars*," said a young civilian in the Secretariat. "Now I have observed——"

"I dare say you have," said the Deputy Commissioner, "but you've a great deal more to observe, my son. In the meantime, I wish to observe to

you——" and he drew him aside to discuss the construction of the canal that was so dear to his heart. Holden went to his bungalow and began to understand that he was not alone in the world, and also that he was afraid for the sake of another,—which is the most soul-satisfying fear known to man.

Two months later, as the Deputy had foretold, Nature began to audit her accounts with a red pencil. On the heels of the spring-reapings came a cry for bread, and the Government, which had decreed that no man should die of want, sent wheat. Then came the cholera from all four quarters of the compass. It struck a pilgrimgathering of half a million at a sacred shrine. Many died at the feet of their god; the others broke and ran over the face of the land carrying the pestilence with them. It smote a walled city and killed two hundred a day. The people crowded the trains, hanging on to the foot-boards and squatting on the roofs of the carriages, and the cholera followed them, for at each station they dragged out the dead and the dying. They died by the roadside, and the horses of the Englishmen shied at the corpses in the grass. The rains did not come, and the earth turned to iron lest man should escape death by hiding in her. The English sent their wives away to the hills and went about their work, coming forward as they were bidden to fill the gaps in the fighting-line. Holden, sick with fear of losing his chiefest treasure on earth, had done his best to persuade Ameera to go away with her mother to the Himalayas.

"Why should I go?" said she one evening on the roof.

"There is sickness, and people are dying, and all the white *mem-log* have gone."

"All of them?"

"All—unless perhaps there remain some old scald-head who vexes her husband's heart by running risk of death."

"Nay; who stays is my sister, and

thou must not abuse her, for I will be a scald-head too. I am glad all the bold *mem-log* are gone."

"Do I speak to a woman or a babe? Go to the hills and I will see to it that thou goest like a queen's daughter. Think, child. In a red-lacquered bullock cart, veiled and curtained, with orrass peacocks upon the pole and red cloth hangings. I will send two orderlies for guard and——"

"Peace! Thou art the babe in speaking thus. What use are those toys to me? *He* would have patted the bullocks and played with the housings. For his sake, perhaps,—thou hast made me very English — I might have gone. Now, I will not. Let the *mem-log* run."

"Their husbands are sending them, beloved."

"Very good talk. Since when hast thou been my husband to tell me what to do? I have but born thee a son. Thou art only all the desire of my soul to me. How shall I depart when I know that if evil befall thee by the breadth of so much as my littlest fingernail—is that not small?—I should be aware of it though I were in paradise. And here, this summer thou mayst die—*ai, janee*, die! and in dying they might call to tend thee a white woman, and she would rob me in the last of thy love!"

"But love is not born in a moment or on a death-bed!"

"What dost thou know of love, stone-heart? She would take thy thanks at least and, by God and the Prophet and Beebe Miriam the mother of thy Prophet, that I will never endure. My lord and my love, let there be no more foolish talk of going away. Where thou art, I am. It is enough." She put an arm round his neck and a hand on his mouth.

There are not many happinesses so complete as those that are snatched under the shadow of the sword. They sat together and laughed, calling each other openly by every pet name that could move the wrath of the gods. The city below them was locked up in its own torments. Sulphur fires blazed in

the streets; the conches in the Hindu temples screamed and bellowed, for the gods were inattentive in those days. There was a service in the great Mahomedan shrine, and the call to prayer from the minarets was almost unceasing. They heard the wailing in the houses of the dead, and once the shriek of a mother who had lost a child and was calling for its return. In the grey dawn they saw the dead borne out through the city gates, each litter with its own little knot of mourners. Wherefore they kissed each other and shivered.

It was a red and heavy audit, for the land was very sick and needed a little breathing-space ere the torrent of cheap life should flood it anew. The children of immature fathers and undeveloped mothers made no resistance. They were cowed and sat still, waiting till the sword should be sheathed in November if it were so willed. There were gaps among the English, but the gaps were filled. The work of superintending famine-relief, cholera-sheds, medicine-distribution, and what little sanitation was possible, went forward because it was so ordered.

Holden had been told to keep himself in readiness to move to replace the next man who should fall. There were twelve hours in each day when he could not see Ameera, and she might die in three. He was considering what his pain would be if he could not see her for three months, or if she died out of his sight. He was absolutely certain that her death would be demanded—so certain that when he looked up from the telegram and saw Pir Khan breathless in the doorway, he laughed aloud, "*And?*" said he,—

"When there is a cry in the night and the spirit flutters into the throat, who has a charm that will restore? Come swiftly, Heaven-born! It is the black cholera."

Holden galloped to his home. The sky was heavy with clouds, for the long deferred rains were near and the heat was stifling. Ameera's mother met him in the courtyard, whimpering, "She is dying. She is nursing her-

self into death. She is all but dead. What shall I do, *sahib*?"

Ameera was lying in the room in which Tota had been born. She made no sign when Holden entered because the human soul is a very lonely thing and, when it is getting ready to go away, hides itself in a misty borderland where the living may not follow. The black cholera does its work quietly and without explanation. Ameera was being thrust out of life as though the Angel of Death had himself put his hand upon her. The quick breathing seemed to show that she was neither afraid nor in pain, but neither eyes nor mouth gave any answer to Holden's kisses. There was nothing to be said or done. Holden could only wait and suffer. The first drops of the rain began to fall on the roof and he could hear shouts of joy in the parched city.

The soul came back a little and the lips moved. Holden bent down to listen. "Keep nothing of mine," said Ameera. "Take no hair from my head. She would make thee burn it later on. That flame I should feel. Lower! Stoop lower! Remember only that I was thine and bore thee a son. Though thou wed a white woman to-morrow, the pleasure of receiving in thy arms thy first son is taken from thee for ever. Remember me when thy son is born—the one that shall carry thy name before all men. His misfortunes be on my head. I bear witness—I bear witness"—the lips were forming the words on his ear—"that there is no God but—thee, beloved!"

Then she died. Holden sat still, and all thought was taken from him,—till he heard Ameera's mother lift the curtain.

"Is she dead, *sahib*?"

"She is dead."

"Then I will mourn, and afterwards take an inventory of the furniture in this house. For that will be mine. The *sahib* does not mean to resume it? It is so little, so very little, *sahib*, and I am an old woman. I would like to lie softly."

"For the mercy of God be silent, a

while. Go out and mourn where I cannot hear."

"*Sahib*, she will be buried in four hours."

"I know the custom. I shall go ere she is taken away. That matter is in thy hands. Look to it, that the bed on which—on which she lies—"

"Aha! That beautiful red-lacquered bed. I have long desired——"

"That the bed is left here untouched for my disposal. All else in the house is thine. Hire a cart, take everything, go hence, and before sunrise let there be nothing in this house but that which I have ordered thee to respect."

"I am an old woman. I would stay at least for the days of mourning, and the rains have just broken. Whither shall I go?"

"What is that to me? My order is that there is a going. The house-gear is worth a thousand rupees and my orderly shall bring thee a hundred rupees to-night."

"That is very little. Think of the cart-hire."

"It shall be nothing unless thou goest, and with speed. O woman, get hence and leave me to my dead!"

The mother shuffled down the staircase, and in her anxiety to take stock of the house-fittings forgot to mourn. Holden stayed by Ameera's side and the rain roared on the roof. He could not think connectedly by reason of the noise, though he made many attempts to do so. Then four sheeted ghosts glided dripping into the room and stared at him through their veils. They were the washers of the dead. Holden left the room and went out to his horse. He had come in a dead, stifling calm through ankle-deep dust. He found the court-yard a rain-lashed pond alive with frogs; a torrent of yellow water ran under the gate, and a roaring wind drove the bolts of the rain like buck-shot against the mud walls. Pir Khan was shivering in his little hut by the gate, and the horse was stamping uneasily in the water.

"I have been told the *sahib's* order," said Pir Khan. "It is well. This house is now desolate. I go also, for my

monkey-face would be a reminder of that which has been. Concerning the bed, I will bring that to thy house yonder in the morning; but remember, *sahib*, it will be to thee a knife turned in a green wound. I go upon a pilgrimage, and I will take no money. I have grown fat in the protection of the Presence whose sorrow is my sorrow. For the last time I hold his stirrup."

He touched Holden's foot with both hands and the horse sprang out into the road, where the creaking bamboos were whipping the sky and all the frogs were chuckling. Holden could not see for the rain in his face. He put his hands before his eyes and muttered,

"Oh you brute! You utter brute!"

The news of his trouble was already in his bungalow. He read the knowledge in his butler's eyes when Ahmed Khan brought in food, and for the first and last time in his life laid a hand upon his master's shoulder, saying: "Eat, *sahib*, eat. Meat is good against sorrow. I also have known. More-over the shadows come and go, *sahib*; the shadows come and go. These be curried eggs."

Holden could neither eat nor sleep. The heavens sent down eight inches of rain in that night and washed the earth clean. The waters tore down walls, broke roads, and scoured open the shallow graves on the Mahomedan burying-ground. All next day it rained, and Holden sat still in his house considering his sorrow. On the morning of the third day he received a telegram which said only: "Rickells, Myndonie. Dying. Holden relieve. Immediate." Then he thought that before he departed he would look at the house wherein he had been master and lord. There was a break in the weather, and the rank earth steamed with vapour.

He found that the rains had torn

down the mud pillars of the gateway, and the heavy wooden gate that had guarded his life hung lazily from one hinge. There was grass three inches high in the courtyard; Pir Khan's lodge was empty, and the sodden thatch sagged between the beams. A gray squirrel was in possession of the verandah, as if the house had been untenanted for thirty years instead of three days. Ameera's mother had removed everything except some mildewed matting. The *tick-tick* of the little scorpions as they hurried across the floor was the only sound in the house. Ameera's room and the other one where Tota had lived were heavy with mildew; and the narrow staircase leading to the roof was streaked and stained with rain-borne mud. Holden saw all these things, and came out again to meet in the road Durga Dass, his landlord,—portly, affable, clothed in white muslin, and driving a C-spring buggy. He was overlooking his property to see how the roofs stood the stress of the first rains.

"I have heard," said he, "you will not take this place any more, *sahib*?"

"What are you going to do with it?"

"Perhaps I shall let it again."

"Then I will keep it on while I am away."

Durga Dass was silent for some time. "You shall not take it on, *sahib*," he said. "When I was a young man I also—, but to-day I am a member of the Municipality. Ho! Ho! No. When the birds have gone what need to keep the nest? I will have it pulled down—the timber will sell for something always. It shall be pulled down, and the Municipality shall make a road across, as they desire, from the burning-*ghaut* to the city wall, so that no man may say where this house stood."

RUDYARD KIPLING.